DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING AL-MAHDI

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Translator: Sayyid Sulayman Ali Hasan

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Title and Author: Discussions concerning Al-Mahdi/ Lutfullah Safi Gulpaygani; translated by Sulayman Ali Hasan

Written in the form of questions and answers, it discusses about the three main topics .Shiaism, Imamah and Mahdism

Introduction

With the Name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful

"!O' Master of the Age, grant us succor"

Allah has called all of His creation to obedience to Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), since obedience to him is obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), and obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is obedience to Allah, and Allah has created the entire universe to obey and worship Him.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالإِنْسَ إِلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"And I have not created the Jinn and mankind except to worship Me."(١)

In order to "obey the Mahdi (peace be upon them)" one must carry his guardianship and love in the heart; and to attain his love, one must recognize him.

Without recognizing the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), his love cannot take hold in the heart. And without loving him, obeying and following him do not come about. And without following him, devoutness is not possible. And without devoutness, perplexity and misguidedness and wandering in the darkness will result; it is as we have been taught in the form of supplications:

اَللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِی حُجَّتَکَ فَإِنَّکَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِی حُجَّتَکَ ضَلَلْتُ عَنْ دِیْنِی

"O' Allah, make me recognize Your authority, for

١- Surah Dhariat (٥١), Verse ٥۶

(if You don’t make me recognize him, I shall go astray in my religion.”[1]

:And they have said

مَنْ أَنْكَرَ الْمَهْدِی فَقَدَ كَفَرَ

”.One who denies the Mahdi (peace be upon him) has become a disbeliever“

:And also

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيْتَةً جَاهِلِيَّهٍ

One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of the Age of“ (Ignorance.”[2]

It is on this basis that the religion of Islam does not take form except within the limits .of “Shiaism”—which is the true conformity to religion

And obedience to the religious commands has no meaning except on the basis of .“Imamah”—which is the Divine leadership

And belief in “Imamah” and leadership in the era after the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) does not take shape except with accepting the principle of the .“Mahdi”—which is the universal dissemination of the guidance

.Shiaism” is nothing other than the reality of the pure Muhammadan Islam“

Imamah” is nothing other than the continuity of the mission of the Noble Prophet of“ .(Islam (peace be upon him and his family

And “Mahdism” is nothing other than the life and vitality of “Imamah” in the era of the concealment and the worldwide rule of Divine unity and justice in the era of the .reappearance

It is this very way of thinking that has compelled the enemies of Islam to make all .kinds of plots and conspiracies to obliterate Shiaism, Imamah, and belief in the Mahdi

Always, the Shi‘a have been put under pressure in order for the non-believers and hypocrites to

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۱- Al-Kafi, Volume ۱, Page ۳۳۷, hadith ۵

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۸, Page ۳۶۸, hadith ۴۱

.be able to pursue their activities

In order to strengthen the Islam of the caliphs and justify the expediency-based rulings of the apparently Muslim rulers, objections have been raised regarding the .issue of Imamah

And in order to crush the combatants and make reformers despair, the very principal .of the Mahdi has been subject to denial

In spite of all this, it is only the "authenticity of Shiaism," the "majesty of the Imamah," and the "integrity of Mahdism" that guaranteed the preservation of the true prophetic traditions, the becoming reality of the Qur'anic guidance, and the progress of the .revolutionary and ideal teachings of the Divine leaders

The book in front of you is one of the valuable works of the eminent teacher and well-known researcher, Ayatullah al-'Uzma Safi Gulpaygani. It has been written in the form of questions and answers—which is one of the most influential ways of research and writing—about the three main topics of "Shiaism," "Imamah," and "Mahdism." It has answered the existing objections according to what is necessary and possible in .the limits of this brief book

Allah is the provider of tawfiq

,Research Unit of the Holy Masjid of Jamkaran

Sha'ban, ١۴١٩

Part ١: Shi'ism

Historical Factors and Shi'ism

:Question

Have historical factors influenced the development of Shiaism, or is this sect a set of beliefs derived from the Qur'an and the clear traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace be ?(upon him and his family

:Answer

:We need to explain several points in order to shed light on the topic and show that

a) historical factors and events had)

no role in the development of Shiaism and the belief in the existence of an Imam who will save humanity

b) all beliefs of the Shi'a are entirely Islamic and are derived from the same sources) that the remainder of Muslim beliefs, from the Unity of Allah to the Day of Judgement, .are derived from

A. The Origin of Shiaism In the Prophet's Time

In accordance with firm historical evidence and abundant traditions, the origin and formation of Shiaism was during the time of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). It began in the very first years of the prophetic mission and was completed by conveying Hhadith al-Thaqalain and officially and publicly proclaiming it during the .event of Ghadir Khumm

Of course, during his final illness, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) wished to put that hadith in written form, and strong historical evidence and narrations indicate that 'Umar's obstruction and the disrespect shown to the Holy .Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) prevented him from having it written

The principles of Shi'a belief have been referred to in various places in the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) words of guidance. By way of example, the issue of the leadership of the Muslim community ('ummah), brought up many times at suitable occasions, can be found among the sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). The importance of the issue of Imamah (leadership of the 'ummah) has been emphasized in his sayings to an extent

that in one of his well-known and in fact mutawatir (consecutively-narrated) :traditions he says

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمَ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَهَ الجْاَهِلِيَّهِ.

One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of the Days of" (Ignorance (before the advent of Islam)."(1)

Death while ignorant of the Imam has been regarded as equal to dying during the Age of Ignorance – or rather they have been considered the same thing. According to consecutively narrated traditions, the conditions of the Imam, which tribe he is from, and the fact that the number of Imams (peace be upon them) is twelve all have been .(explained by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family

Similarly, the qualities of the Imam's knowledge, his spiritual characteristics, and that he must be the most knowledgeable and perfect of all human beings have been explained in the Qur'an and traditions, as has the fact that the successorship of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and Imamate of the ummah after .him is a Divine post that, just like prophethood itself, is appointed by Allah

Shi'a thought was established in the very first years of the advent of Islam on the basis of the original sources of Islam. However, at that time the opposing school of thought – which some time later came to be known as Sunni thought – did not exist and the Muslims were not divided into two branches. This is because those who, after the Prophet's (peace be

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸, p. ۳۶۸, in the course of Allamah Majlisi's commentary

upon him and his family) death, propagated the opposing view – which caused a division in the Muslim ranks – were unable to openly position themselves against the .pure Islam, which later came to be known as Shi‘a Islam

This division officially became apparent after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) when a group gathered in Saqifah and chose a successor for the Holy .(Prophet (peace be upon him and his family

We must add that according to the guidance provided in the Holy Qur'an, in Islam, a reliable source and authority for explaining, organizing, and legislating beliefs has :been foreseen and in numerous verses has been clearly stated, such as in Surah Nisa

وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ.

Although, were they to refer that to the Messenger (peace be upon him and his" family) and those in authority among them, those among them who understand the (roots of the issues would know it."(۱

From this verse, it is understood that leadership is exclusive to the Holy Prophet .(peace be upon him and his family) and the ulu 'l-amr, who are the infallible Imams

According to mutawatir traditions, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) has clearly introduced this virtuous authority, which is none other than the progeny and Imams from the Ahl al-Bait of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). He has said, "They are with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with them, and they and

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Surah an-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۸۳ -۱

".the Qur'an shall never separate from each other

:In fact, in one hadith, he has added

فَإِنَّ فِينَا أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ فِي كُلِّ خَلَفٍ عُدُولاً يَنْفُونَ عَنْهُ تحَرِيفَ الْغَالِينَ وَانتِهَالَ الْمُبْطِلِينَ.

Among us, the Ahl al-Bait, in every generation there are found people firm in religion" who protect the religion from the tampering of extremists and the mischief of the (astray."(١

B. The Origin of the Issue of Khilafah

From the first days of the prophetic mission (bi`thah) the issue of leadership of the Islamic Nation after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was more or less in people's minds. The story of the man who made his acceptance of Islam conditional upon becoming the leader after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), which the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) did not accept, .is well known

The Shi'a viewpoint about successorship of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is a point that was announced by divine command before the people during the time of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) by the Prophet himself. At that time, none opposed it; rather, all the people – even those who later were involved in the events at Saqifah – celebrated it, and while pledging allegiance congratulated the Imam (peace be upon him). But from that very instant they began covertly planning and plotting and reached a point where they wished to assassinate !(the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family

After the Holy Prophet

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٢, p. ٩٢, footnote ٢١ -١

peace be upon him and his family), the issue became a crisis and the opponents, with) unusual severity and hard-heartedness, acted in the name of expediency and by threats and plotting created such an atmosphere that in the end they opposed the arrangements the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had announced, to the extent that they insulted and transgressed the personality of Fatimah az-Zahra (peace be upon her) and distanced the course of Muslim history from the path the .Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had specified

With the limitless cruelty they showed, they even trampled the dignity of the .Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) only offspring

Of course, because of the policy 'Ali (peace be upon him) pursued, two schools – Shi'a and Sunni – did not come into open and violent confrontation. The issue only remained in the minds of those who thought about the legitimacy of the government; others, either indifferent to the matter or associated with the ruling party, did not discuss it. .They may very well have considered it settled

However, people like 'Umar ibn al-Khattab were aware that in the face of the arrangements announced by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) the legitimacy of their actions would always be under question. Thus, they prevented the return of the people to that authentic Islamic thinking by using political devices, and this is the reason that for about a century and a half they forbade

traditions from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). And since 'Umar knew that if he did not find a way to sideline 'Ali (peace be upon him) after him 'Ali (peace be upon him) would definitely assume leadership, he plotted a new strategy.

He knew that if the testament – about which it is not known whether it is authentic or whether 'Uthman added it to the document – was not attributed to Abu Bakr, Shi'a thinking would again rise after 'Umar's death and their plotting would be fruitless.

He thus devised a six-member council and specified its mandate in such a way as to eliminate Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him).

In spite of this, the program specified by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was revived in memories and finally, in the end of 'Uthman's period, his oppression aroused general anger and disgust towards him and stirred the Muslims to rise against him. In this way the issue of successorship of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was again raised and many companions returned to the Prophet's original dictate and declared 'Ali (peace be upon him) the rightful successor of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and regarded jihad under him (peace be upon him) the highest form of worship.

Thus, the Shi'a belief about the succession to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was never forgotten and people's hearts were never without attachment to the Ahl

al-Bait and awareness that they had been oppressed and their right usurped. People's statements and the odes of poets such as al-Farazdaq show that the Shi'a point of view existed and even an individual like Musa ibn Nasir – the ruler of Africa whose slave, Tariq, conquered Spain – in spite of being one of the officials of Banu Umayya's government, was a proponent of Shi'a thought. For this very reason, in spite of all of his services, in the end his property was confiscated and he was .removed from office

In fact, events came to such a pass that this point of view even penetrated the family of Mu'awiya and Yazid, and Yazid's son officially condemned his grandfather and father and acknowledged the right of 'Ali and the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them). .The situation was the same in the time of Banu 'Abbas as well

From the government's point of view the rightfulness and genuineness of Shi'a thought should not have been put forth and followers of this school should not have had official responsibilities. But the situation was such that the oppressive and usurping rulers of Banu 'Abbas such as Mansur, Harun, and Ma'mun, were aware of .the truth of this Shi'a thought, even though in practice they crushed it

As a result of the spread of Shi'a thought, Muntasir and some other rulers from Banu 'Abbas became favorably disposed to this view in the issue of succession to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). It

has been said that Nasir, in whose time the cellar of occultation in Samarra was inspected, declared himself Shi‘a, and it has been narrated that he regarded himself .(the deputy of the twelfth Imam (peace be upon him

From the sum of the above facts it becomes clear that the true Islam, which is the same Shi‘a thought and Islam that existed in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), has been there over the last fourteen centuries and history played no role in its existence. Rather, the existence of this point of view played a part in the coming about of major movements, risings, and events. Contrary to what some simple and misinformed people think, it must be said that Shi‘a governments in Egypt, Africa, and the Dayalima in Iran and Iraq, and finally the rise of the Safawiyya were all .events brought about by Shi‘a thought; they played no role in bringing it about

C. Sunnism and its Sectarian Meaning (in opposition to Shiaism) After the Prophet’s Time

The analysis that Shiaism, like Sunnism, had from the beginning a political form and gradually developed a religious basis is incorrect. Opposition to the successor announced by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had a political aspect and that same political behavior caused division and conflict and brought into existence a new opinion in opposition to belief in Imamah. It resulted in the followers of pure Islam, in the form of a faction and with the name Shi‘a, developing a political .orientation

But the policy the Shi‘a as a

political group pursued after this affair was based on the true teachings of Islam. Before it acquired a political tint, it was a principle pertaining to belief and religion, and .it was a creed that included politics

Thus, politicians would oppose this creed and strove to introduce a new sect and school of thought in opposition to it. In this way, at great expense and by bribing, threatening, and terrorizing, they in later periods gave a religious form to the policies .that made the khilafah (succession) deviate from its specified course

Of course, this movement wanted only to acquire the government, and if they hadn't seen this aspect in Shiaism, they would not have opposed it and would not have .introduced a sect by the name of Sunnism in opposition to it

Thus, politics was the motive for opposition to Shiaism and the command announced by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). In the beginning, when the leaders of this party started their activities in those confused times, they hadn't yet put .forward a clear way of thinking

Many factors, primary among which was the threat of the destruction of Islam through internal armed strife, prevented the religio-political leaders from reaching for their swords, and this aided the leaders of the anti-Shi'a school in taking hold of .affairs

Since they had no firm thinking for them to follow in practice and in no case respected the principle of bay`ah (allegiance) and election by the people, the basis of their government was coercion

.and tyranny

After the event of Saqifah which was the reason for Abu Bakr's assumption of power, 'Umar, with the peculiar coarseness and roughness that he possessed, drew his sword and roamed the streets, forcing the people to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr. This coercion came to such a pass that they even demanded allegiance of 'Ali (peace be upon him) and forcibly took him to the masjid to obtain his allegiance, after unspeakable insolence to Lady Fatima (peace be upon her) and desecrating the .sanctity of her house

The government of 'Umar himself, which he claimed was formed in accordance to Abu Bakr's testament, was such that they said that when Abu Bakr was on his deathbed and was in an out of consciousness, he endeavored to write a testament. In that situation, without him specifying the ruler after him, 'Uthman wrote 'Umar's !name in the testament. When Abu Bakr returned to consciousness, he affirmed it

Whatever it was, was there even a testament in place? In any case, 'Umar came to power and no one so much as said to Abu Bakr, "Pain has overcome him"(۱); no regard is given to what this ailing man, who has lost his reason, says. Yet with this very excuse they prevented the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) from writing a !testament

Be that as it may, with Abu Bakr's appointment 'Umar took control of power and .himself appointed a six-member council for after his death

Thus, we come to know that there

Commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah, Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid, vol. ۲, p. ۵۵ -۱

was no harmonious idea based on the people's right to election involved in the affair. However, when 'Uthman was killed, the Muslims rushed to 'Ali's (peace be upon him) door – and though, according to the Shi'a, he alone was the rightful ruler – all pledged allegiance to him. Afterwards, though the opponents of the Shi'a strove to find a religious basis for government and put forward the idea of general allegiance or that of the upper class and other contradictory ideas – even force and overpowering – as such a basis, in reality the standard was nothing but coercion. They acted in such a way that the people had no choice but pledging allegiance to the successor appointed by the ruler.

Thus, the Shi'a's opponents had no overall program of government, and even in current times one of their biggest researchers, who has realized this fact, says:

"In fact, Islam has not foreseen a particular method in the politics of selecting a ruler; any form the people themselves specify becomes the law and is implemented."

D. Cause of the Division of Muslims into two factions, Sunni and Shi'a

The fact is that the real reason for this split was the love of status and power.

A few saw that with the situation that had taken shape, they would have no part in the future leadership; thus from the very time of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) they began grouping and conspiring. One of their major plans was to introduce and then propagate a new school of thought in opposition to the Prophet's

.peace be upon him and his family) stance)

The Book of Allah suffices us) to reduce the value) "حَسْبُنَا كِتَابُ اللهِ" They raised the slogan of the existing traditions about Imamah, and in the end they introduced these traditions as worthless. For this very reason when the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) wished to write his testament, since they knew this written testament would reinforce his oral testaments, they put up firm resistance. In words also related ,by Ahl al-Sunnah, 'Umar said

غَلَبَ عَلَيهِ الْوَجَعُ. حَسْبُنَا كِتَابُ اللهِ.

(Illness has overcome him; the book of Allah suffices us."(١)"

,According to the narration of others, he said

"إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَهْجُرُ."

(!The man (The Prophet) speaks nonsense!"(٢) (God forbid"

In either case, he stood in the way and said, "The book of Allah suffices us," meaning that we have no need of the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) testament .and his explicit statements

The title Shi'a was given to the followers of 'Ali (peace be upon him) in that period by the Prophet himself (peace be upon him and his family). The Prophet called his sincere followers the Shi'a. But this did not result in the division of the Muslims into two groups. Though people like Salman, Abu Dharr, and Miqdad had a firm belief in 'Ali (peace be upon him) from that time, the opponents were not yet an independent group, and these admonitions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) about Imamah meant that all should follow

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Commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah, Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid, vol. ٢, p. ٥٥ -١

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٣٠ p. ٥٣٥ -٢

.(Imam ’Ali (peace be upon him

But after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), opposition to this command came out in the open and the love of power and ruling over others – which some had set their sights on – caused some, in spite of the Prophet’s explicit statements about ‘Ali’s successorship, to oppose that and cause division in the ranks .of the Muslims

If we wish to hide the facts and present a different explanation, even if untrue, we have to say that this division started when because of their weak faith a group of Muslims did not give the Prophet’s (peace be upon him and his family) words and counsel the same status as revelation and assumed the book of Allah is sufficient for people’s guidance and there is no need for the Prophet’s words. It is as if they regarded themselves as the Prophet’s equals in grasping the Qur’an’s principles and .purposes

Thus, they did not follow the path he (peace be upon him and his family) had specified and favored their personal opinion and the benefit and harm they themselves perceived for themselves over the Prophet’s commands. Or else they considered some of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him and his family) commands as being related to government and administration of society, but considered them modifiable as .conditions required

They presumed the successorship was just such an issue and believed that even if the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had

appointed his own successor, since his words and actions – in their view – did not have the status of revelation, opposition to them is permissible. Thus after the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) death these people ignored the Prophet's command and set it aside and with these false excuses removed the successorship from its specified course.

Even though they had no proper system of thought for the administration of society in those conditions on which they could base the khilafah, still they insisted that the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) appointee shouldn't take charge of the administration of society, or it isn't expedient. In spite of the fact that in some issues they insisted on implementing the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) command, here their conduct was the opposite, just as, when the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) appointed 'Usamah as the leader of the army, they did not leave him in his post. In any case, they thought it was their right to adjust the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) commands, carry out any changes or alterations they thought necessary and make use of pretexts that are worse than the crime itself.

In opposition to this group it was Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) and a small group of his followers who believed in the truth of the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) teachings and commands and would say that the

Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) words have the ruling of revelation, or rather that they are in fact revelation, as the Qur'an says in this regard:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الهَوَى إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى.

"He speaks not of his own desire; it is naught but revelation that is revealed."(۱)

And the verse:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا.

"What the Messenger has brought you, take, and what he forbids you from, avoid."(۲)

refers to the commands of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), which must be implemented without alteration, and we are in no way free of need of the Prophet's counsels and teachings. The religion of Islam is perfect and comprehensive from all aspects and no defect can be imagined in it.

This group was called Ahl al-Nass (followers of the religious texts). They would say that the path of re-interpreting and contextualizing these traditions is closed and the succession of Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) was conveyed at Allah's command to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) by revelation.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ...

"O' Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed to thee by thy Lord..."(۳)

In any case, the Muslims were in this way split into two camps. In truth, using the term "Ahl al-Sunnat" (followers of the sunnat) to refer to those who rejected, altered, and falsely interpreted the sunnat is incorrect. Instead, those deserving this title are the ones who remained attached to the

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۱- Surah Najm (۵۳), Verses ۳-۴

۲- Surah Hashr (۵۹), Verse ۷

Surah Ma’idah (۵), Verse ۶۷ -۳

.(Qur'an and Prophetic sunnat (conduct

Incidentally, intent of those who by clinging to "The book of Allah suffices us" split the Muslims into two camps is that the basic matter of the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) messengership is the book of Allah and there is no need of the Prophetic sunnat. Even though this group, with there way of thinking, opposed the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) explicit command regarding Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him), after they had sidelined 'Ali (peace be upon him) they returned to the Prophet's sunnat in many instances, since they saw that their fallacious way of thinking could not go forward. By raising the slogan "The book of Allah suffices us" it is .not possible to obtain needed rulings and solve society's difficulties

Of course, the opponents of the Shi'a thought benefited substantially from such slogans and deceived a large group, most of whom were commoners and unaware, and they prevented the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) from writing his testament. With this excuse they marginalized those who said the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) command regarding the successorship of 'Ali (peace be upon him) must be respected and made it their principle that only the Qur'an is central. Their aim was that the traditions of Ghadir, yawn al-dar, and other ahadith not be mentioned. Later, when they saw that without the traditions it is not possible to manage the affairs they became

involved in ijtihad (juristic reasoning) in opposition to ahadith (the exercise of personal opinion) and altered the commandments of Allah and turned to false interpretations, .explanations, and analogy, and they subjected many traditions to doubt

The origin of the Shi'a school, like the origin of Islam itself, is not related to historical events. Of course, events had and have an effect on people's political positions and the occurrence of certain happenings, but is not the primary factor on all matters. For example, one of the causes and wisdoms in the concealment of the twelfth Imam (peace be upon him) – as indicated by some traditions – was that he (peace be upon him) not be caught up in allegiance to oppressive rulers. However, his existence (peace be upon him) and concealment, according to consecutively narrated (mutawatir) traditions, was a destined affair determined in advance and which occurred according to that plan. It is not that the issue of Imamah came about .gradually through time and the course of history has made it necessary

Through historical research it becomes clear that it is the Sunni school of thought about the succession that came about as a result of a chain of historical causes; otherwise Shi'a thought about the principle of Imamah, as explained several times, was founded at the beginning of the Prophetic mission (bi`thah) as a result of Allah's .command and the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) clear instructions

Thus, it was Shi'a thought that influenced history, not history that

.created it

Opponents of the Shi'a school of thought say that there was no guidance from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in this regard. Thus, after the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) demise, the concern and confusion that had taken hold of the Muslims caused them to specify someone as khalifah. This was accomplished in Saqifah after much discussion and searching that resulted in Abu Bakr being chosen as the Prophet's successor. Subsequently, in order to avoid unpleasant events and chaos in society, Abu Bakr appointed his successor and 'Umar in turn specified a six-member council for after his death to make a decision in this .regard

All of these occurrences had particular reasons at the head of which was political goals. Though the supporters of this point of view try to portray this important historical happening as natural, facts are at odds with its being natural. On the other .hand, in numerous ways they support the Shi'a point of view about Imamah

(E. The Religious Basis for Support of the Leadership of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them

Support for the leadership of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) from the beginning was based on Islamic teachings. Those who opposed Saqifah and the succession of Abu Bakr had no motive except their religious duty and guarding the teachings and .(guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family

Referring to books like The Origin of the Shi'a and their Principles, History of the Shi'a, The Shi'a in History, and tens of other Shi'a and Sunni books will at least demonstrate

.that inclination to Shiaism from the beginning has had only a religious motive

The sermons of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) in Nahj al-Balagha affirm that the true position of the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) has truly been material, spiritual, and religious leadership, of which governing is a branch.

The Shi'a and Armed Uprising

:Question

Is armed uprising one of the conditions of the Imamah of the Imam? Is armed uprising unconditionally and in all situations part of the agenda of the Shi'a? In other words, must the Shi'a always be in a state of armed conflict with oppressive systems of government, or are the same conditions relevant here as are mentioned about enjoining good and forbidding evil? Also, what was the role of the Shi'a in the armed ?uprisings against the government of Banu Umayyah

:Answer

The Shi'a have no agenda regarding jihad against the infidels except the agenda of Islam, which has been explained in depth on books of jurisprudence, and which many .jurisprudents consider obligatory only in case of the presence and call of the Imam

However, defending the heart of Islam and honor of the Muslims and repelling the enemies' attacks from the Islamic borders – whether physical, cultural, or economical – is a general obligation. In fact, according to the verse of the Qur'an preparation to .defend and guard the physical and cultural borders is a Divine obligation

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الخَيلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ.

And prepare what strength you are able and trained horses with"

(which you frighten the enemy of Allah and your enemy."(1)

In the physical battlefield, this is by acquiring military weaponry and in the cultural or economic battlefield by acquiring the provisions peculiar to that arena. In this aspect, the time of the Imam's presence is no different from the time of his absence.

Just as a Muslim's house, dependents, property, and self must be safe from danger and attack by outsiders,

وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

"One who is killed defending his possessions is a martyr"(2)

the Islamic homeland as well – which is the home of all – must be free from danger.

This is the gist of the method of dealing with external enemies. As for dealing with internal anti-Islamic events and factors that hypocritically inflict damage on Islam and Muslims on account of seeking power, the positions taken to repel these dangers must be such as are able to remove that anti-Islamic movement.

Of course, in instances where this movement jeopardizes the existence of Islam or threatens the laws of Islam and society's security and repelling this danger depends on an armed movement, armed uprising becomes obligatory.

In short, in the Shi'a way of thinking, complacency with respect to opposing and oppressive events is condemned.

A Muslim must give importance to everything that is related to the honor and grandeur of Islam and Muslims and to elevating the word of Allah and must always act according to his duty.

Still, armed uprising is not among the conditions of the Imamah of the Imam as has

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1- Surah Anfal (8), Verse 6

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ١, p. ٢٢۶ -٢

been attributed to the Zaydi sect. It is not the case that every leader of an armed group, if from the descendants and family of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), is regarded as Imam. And one who apparently had no armed uprising and struggle cannot, for this reason, be declared not to be the Imam, as was the case with Imam Zain al-‘Abidin, Imam Muhamad al-Baqir, and Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq :(peace be upon him). This is because

First, their non-armed policies were more effective than armed uprising in elevating .the name of Islam, guarding the truth, and protecting the shari`at in their time

Second, as has been related in the tradition of Mahmud ibn Labid from Fatimah az-:(Zahra (peace be upon her

مَثَلُ الاِمَامِ مَثَلُ الْكَعْبَهِ إِذْ يُؤْتَی وَلاَ يَأْتِی١٥

It is the people’s duty to gather round the candle of the Imam’s existence and present themselves to assist him, elevate the name of Islam, and guard the objectives of the .religion. In such a situation, the Imam chooses whatever position is appropriate

Thus, Amir al-Mu’minin (peace be upon him), after the death of ‘Uthman, did not leave the people without an answer when they rushed to him from all directions to pledge :allegiance with that commotion and longing. He said

أَمَا وَالَّذِی فَلَقَ الحَبَّهَ وَبَرَأَ النَّسَمَهَ لَوْلاَ حُضُورُ الحَاضِرِ وَقِيَامُ الحُجَّهِ بِوُجُودِ النَّاصِرِ وَمَا أَخَذَ اللهُ عَلَی الْعُلَمَاءِ أَلاَّ يُقَارُّوا عَلَی كِظَّهِ ظَالمٍ وَلاَ سَغَبِ مَظْلُومٍ لأَلْقَيْتُ حَبْلَهَا عَلَی غَارِبِهَا وَلَسَقَيْتُ آخِرَهَا بِكَأْسِ أَوَّلِهَا وَلأَلْفَيْتُمْ دُنْيَاكُمْ هذِهِ أَزْهَدَ عِنْدِی

مِنْ عَطْفَهِ عَنْزٍ.

Lo, I swear by the One who split the seed and created man, were it not for the crowd" that had come to me and the establishment of the argument by the presence of supporters, and were it not for the covenant Allah has taken from the `ulama' (scholars) not to remain silent in face of the waste of the oppressors and hunger of the oppressed, I would have abandoned the ropes of the khilafah and filled its latter part with the cup of its former part. You would then have well understood that your world [with all its attractions] is worth less to me than the water that comes out of a sheep's nose!"(۱)

As for the armed revolts against Banu Umayyah, apart from the rebellions of the Khawarij – none of which reached fruition – the cause and motive of all other uprisings was to avenge the blood of Sayyid al-Shuhada' (the Prince of Martyrs) Husayn (peace be upon him) and object to the oppression of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them).

Among those uprisings were those of `Ayn al-Wardah and Mukhtar, in both of which a large number of Shi'a participated. Subsequently, there was the revolt of Zaid and other uprisings, all of which sprang from love of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) and declaring aversion and hatred towards Banu Umayyah. Therefore, we see that a man like Kumail participates in the uprising of `Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Ash`ath or in the last revolt

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۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, edited by Subhi al-Salih, sermon ۳, section ۱

which resulted in the termination of Banu Umayyah's rule and the end of their .dominion over most of the lands of Islam

The true motive for the tragic events of Karbala' and the heart-rending martyrdom of .(Zaid, in a word, was the oppression of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them

Thus, what was important in these uprisings against Banu Umayyah was the role of the Shi'a and making use of the oppressed position of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them), though after the martyrdom of the Prince of Martyrs (peace be upon him) the remaining Imams did not revolt since they did not see conditions as appropriate for the establishment of a just and Islamic government through armed uprising. So they became involved performing their Divine duty in other trenches, especially in .spreading jurisprudence and repelling many innovations

Even in the events after the success of the last revolt against Banu Umayyah the only personality more fitting than all others for leadership was Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him), but though they recommended this task to the Imam (peace be upon him), he refused to accept. His adopting such a policy was, in the belief of the Shi'a, in accordance with a command of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) that was disclosed to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) by revelation. In addition, every Imam recognizes better than all else his duty in light of the existing conditions and always gives precedence to the most important

matters over all other matters. In this issue, too, if the Imam (peace be upon him) were to accept rulership, the important interests of Islam would be lost, since it was apparent to every authority that in those conditions there was no possibility of implementing the luminous laws of Islam and establishing a just Islamic system of .government

Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq and the Shi’a School of Thought

:Question

Was Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) the founder of the Shi‘a school or its ?promulgator and explainer

:Answer

Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) acquainted the public with the original Shi‘a school of thought, which perhaps even some friends and devotees of Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) had not recognized properly. By establishing that vast school of knowledge, he familiarized the people with the realities of true Islam, which are fulfilled by following ‘Ali and the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them). This was while in the periods before Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) the opportunity for .disseminating knowledge was not to the extent that it reached in his time

This does not mean that Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is the founder of Shi‘a thought, since as explained earlier Shi‘a thought existed in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in an organized and systematic manner. Mutawatir traditions and the illuminating guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had specified its limits, and passage of time and occurrences had no .share in its development

Of course, these affairs

had an influence in its propagation, promulgation, and organization in later periods, especially in the time of Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) and Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him), and in fact these very incidents made more clear the truth of this .school of thought as opposed to the opposing school of thought

One of the reasons for the success of Shi'a thought in the issue of Imamah was that during the rule of Banu Umayyah the people witnessed conduct and actions of the claimants to succession of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) which were .incompatible with any of the Islamic laws and principles

This conduct even became a cause for the people's rebellion against them in different instances, though most of these rebellions were quelled by force and in appearance the government of Banu 'Umayyah continued, but overall these events caused the .Shi'a school to spread and become entrenched in people's hearts

(Before Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him

:Question

Has the Shi'a school been discussed in the speech of the religious leaders before ?(Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him

:Answer

As we mentioned before, Shiaism is an genuine Islamic school introduced by the person of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), and all can understand this point from the matter found in Nahj al-Balaghah and the sayings of Amir al-.(Mu'minin (peace be upon him

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) explained the various dimensions of this school for the people and perfected

the people's information about it and eliminated the over- and under-exaggeration .existing regarding this issue

They demonstrated that the principle of Imamah was an genuine and entirely Islamic concept and the reference point of explaining its reality and limits are the Imams (peace be upon them), just as they are the reference for explaining all Islamic concepts and terminology and Qur'anic verses. When their unparalleled and great-learned position became apparent, all understood that those eminent men possessed all abilities and at the same time were the sole reliable source in recognizing the principle of Imamah and its entire and original concept. Of course, this does not mean that we should presume that the principle of Imamah was their innovation or, as .some who do not believe in the unseen world say, a product of history

Among the reliable traditions according to Ahl al-Sunnat are the traditions of 'Ali ibn Husayn (peace be upon him), Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him), and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him); as Ahmad Shakir has written in his commentary of al-Ba`ith al-Hathith, the spiritual position and Imamah of the Imams .before these two Imams was very firm in the hearts of the people

The belief that the Imams are al-Qur'an al-Natiq (the Qur'an that speaks), i.e. they know the specific Qur'anic meanings and expressions, was raised on numerous occasions previous to Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him) in the words of his noble father Imam 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin (peace be upon him) and before

him in the traditions of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), Imam al-Hasan (peace be upon him), and Imam al-Husayn (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) has pointed to this issue in traditions that have passed the limit of tawatur (consecutive narration) and he (peace be upon him and his family) introduced the Imams as equals of the Qur'an. In the books of Ahl al-Sunnat, a sermon has been narrated from Imam 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin (peace be upon him) in which the placing of Imamah in Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) and their being the sole referral authority .and Divine authority for mankind has been discussed explicitly and in depth

Shi'a Ideology's Practicality

:Question

Keeping in view the fact that aside from the short five-year period of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), the administration of society was not in the hands of the Imams (peace be upon them), to what extent is the system of religious government according to the Shi'a view practicable and able to be implemented in ?society

:Answer

Shi'a thought is a logical school that has and has always had the possibility of being .implemented in the core of its teachings

The Shi'a view about the issue of Imamah is that after the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) the religious and political leader of society must be someone who knows better than all else all the laws and principles the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) brought for the

people from Allah. Without doubt during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) none but ‘Ali (peace be upon him) possessed this distinction, and therefore the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) selected ‘Ali (peace be upon him) to succeed him and then introduced the rest of the Shi‘a Imams, who are twelve people in all, to the people and appointed them his successors.

Certainly, this was not because of their physical relationship with the Prophet; rather their spiritual attributes, intellectual abilities and so forth became the reason that Allah chose them alone from among the people to succeed the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), just as the Qur'an says about the successors of the prophets as well:

إِنَّ اللهَ اصْطَفَی آدَمَ وَنُوْحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَی الْعَالمِينَ.

"Verily Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim, and the family of `Imran over all the people of the world."(١)

If the people want to tread the true path in all matters, they must follow them and regard them as wali al-amr (guardians of the believers' affairs), must consider it obligatory to obey them, and must respect their commands just like the commands of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). At the same time, the laws and policies broached in the Shi‘a school are not imaginary and unreal affairs that could be said to be unable to be implemented. Rather, they are the most genuine Islamic teachings that, if conditions are

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١- Surah Ali-Imran (٣), Verse ٣٣

.available, can be implemented in every society

If we see that during a portion of history some people prevented their political aspect from being realized, it does not mean that they cannot be implemented. Rather, since these laws were formulated in view of the realities of the existence of man, all human societies are in search of them, and according to the belief of Shi'as, will in the end reach them. This undertaking will be accomplished at the end of time through the last Divine authority (hujjat), and human society will be administered by a single system .and law

In addition, what is fundamental in the call of the prophets is to explain the realities and the path of salvation and the way that leads to ultimate success, which must be :announced to the people even in case of certainty that it will not be accepted

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا.

(Surely We have guided him to the Path, whether he be grateful or ungrateful."(۱"

This is because the responsibility of the prophet is to propagate the Divine laws, among which is Imamah; it is the people who must accept the prophets' invitation and cooperate with the prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) to make available the .opportunity to put it in practice

The conduct of the Imams (peace be upon them) and their policies were all practical, .bearing results, and at the same time realistic

For example, the conduct of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon them) was in light of the conditions

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Surah Insan (۷۶), Verse ۳ -۱

of existing realities and the conduct of Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) and Imam Husayn Sayyid al-Shuhada' (peace be upon him) was the same way. They performed all their actions while keeping in view existing conditions. For example, if Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) made peace with Mu`awiyah, he took into consideration all the aspects of the issue and in those conditions saw no better course of action. And Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) consciously refused to pledge allegiance to Yazid, went to Karbala' and accepted those sorrowful difficulties, .and in the end reached his purpose

Yes, if Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had been in a different situation and had seen that the path and provisions for taking charge of the government are ready, he would still have moved to acquire his right and repel the undeserving from the khilafah of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). But conditions in his time were such that he knew that the situation is not suitable for reaching this aim. Thus, with the great and unparalleled mission which he implemented he created a reawakening in the Muslim world, and as long as the world remains the reawakening .of Islam's reviver will remain alive

He, although apparently he did not prevent Yazid and all the usurpers of the khilafah who came after him from usurping the khilafah, internally turned people's hearts away from them and put to the wind Mu`awiyah's plots to defeat Islam. He performed

such a deed that afterwards it was said, “Islam is Muhammadi in origin and Husayni in ”.continuance

The remaining Imams (peace be upon him), too, performed well the responsibility with which they were entrusted in protecting Islam, keeping in mind existing .conditions

Belief in the appearance of the savior and twelfth Imam gave comfort to the Shi‘as and created a spirit of resistance, patience, and perseverance in the people and prevented power-seeking, despair, and carelessness towards religion. It is a belief that has been explicitly mentioned in the core of Shi‘a teachings and reliable traditions, and this principle received more attention during the time of Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) and as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) and people’s inclination to it .increased in light of the transgressions the usurping rulers committed

The people understood that if some indifferent individuals during the time of the companions – that is, after the Prophet’s demise (peace be upon him and his family) – conjectured that introducing change in the principle of Imamah would not bring much change in the Islamic agenda, in reality it caused a major tragedy and caused Islam to veer from its true course and the usurped khilafah became a means of hedonism and easy living for a few and of fettering the people and a return to the customs of .Caesar, Kisra, and other Satanic powers

This matter strengthened their faith in the principle of Imamah and they understood that it is only this school of thought that can bring Islam’s agenda

.to fruition and end that deplorable situation

Thus, the becoming conduct of the Imams (peace be upon them) on the one hand and the oppressive behavior of the usurpers of the khilafah on the other caused the Shi'a school of thought to become ever more influential in people's hearts, and as a result their inclination to the Imams (peace be upon the) began to increase. It is because of this that in spite of the efforts of the rulers, Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was .so popular among the masses that the Shi'a themselves are recognized through him

Shi'a Positions with Respect to the Usurping Rulers

:Question

How were the stands of the Shi'a with respect to the rulers and on what basis were ?they taken

:Answer

The positions of the Shi'a have always been on the basis of protecting Islam's interests, preserving the religion, and denying the legitimacy of oppressive and usurping governments, and they have always endeavored, in the form of an opposing .front, to establish a powerful Islamic government on the foundation of religious rule

In explaining the religious concepts, the Shi'a follow only the Qur'an and sunnah and :conduct themselves in accordance with the Qur'anic injunction

وَجَادِلْهُـمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

(And debate with them in the best manner."(۱"

by honorable discussion and debate, and also, in instances, on the basis of taqiyyah (dissimulation) which becomes necessary in certain conditions in all times and places. They do this so that they can guide others to true Islam and the true concepts of the religion and remove society from under the yolk

Surah Naml (۱۶), Verse ۱۲۵ -۱

.of oppressive and usurping rulers and merciless officials

It is thus that we see that the Shi‘a have throughout history always had uprisings .against the armed powers

The Shi‘a believe in the Imamah of those whose names and infallibility were explicitly mentioned by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and in taking positions they always act on the basis of Islamic teachings and the conduct of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). In situations when the right conditions do not exist, such as a portion of the life of Amir al-Mu’minin (peace be upon him), they give preference to silence and apparently sitting aside over rebellion, or conduct themselves like Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) to save .Islam from the threat of splintering

However, the event of Karbala’ and refusal of Sayyid al-Shuhada’ (peace be upon him) to pledge allegiance to Yazid was an uprising the like of which neither had .precedence nor will be seen after it

.That movement was a model and path-opening agenda of struggle for Muslims

That uprising, though apparently it was crushed and defeated, in reality was a successful uprising, since it revived the true Islam and brushed aside the factors of hopelessness and despair from the faces of the Shi‘a and became a cause of their constancy of thought and strength of spirit. After that, no uprising or movement took place among the Shi‘a that was crushed and changed hopes to despair, and the infallible leaders of the Shi‘a

knew, as per the traditions and through the (special) knowledge of the Imamah which they possessed, that belief and faith in the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) must be propagated in the hearts of the people so that, through an increase in their awareness and by training capable powers in academic, political, and cultural arenas, they can prevent the usurping rulers from opposing them and in this way prepare the .way for the rule of the true Islamic views

The Accusation of "Exaggeration" (Ghuluww) Against the Shi'a

:Question

Some writers classify certain sects of the ghulat as Shi'a and may very well accuse the Shi'a of exaggerating the status of the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them). We know this is a false accusation that even in our times the Wahhabis resort to by publishing and disseminating pamphlets among those unfamiliar with Shi'a beliefs. If possible, shed .some light on this topic

:Answer

The issue of exaggerated beliefs has precedence among previous religious ,communities. About the Jews and Christians the Qur'an says

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللهِ.

And the Jews said, 'Uzair is the Son of God,' and the Christians said, 'The Messiah is" (the Son of God.' "(١

:This disease is also found among the Muslims in various forms, as the hadith denotes

لَتَسْلُكَنَّ سُبُلَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَذْوَ النَّعْلِ بِالنَّعْلِ وَالْقُذَّةِ بِالْقُذَّةِ حَتىَ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ دَخَلَ حِجْرَ ضَبٍّ لَدَخَلْتُمُوهُ.

Verily you will follow the paths of those who have gone before you in an exact manner, to the extent that if one of them were to

Surah Tawbah (۹), Verse ۳۰ -۱

(enter a lizard's hole, you would enter it (too).[1]

One form of the above is the situation that came about regarding Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him).

One group began believing in his divinity and praised him in their poetry as their deity. For example, they said

أَنْتَ خَالِقُ الخَلاَئِقِ مَـنْ زَعْزَعَ أَرْكَانَ خَيْبَرَ جَذْمًا

قَدْ رَضِينَا بِهِ إِمَامًا وَمَوْلىً وَسَجَـدْنَا لَهُ إِلهاً وَرَبًّـا

You created the universe,

the one who uprooted Khaybar's firm foundations,

We are happy with him as a leader and master,

and prostrate to him as our God and Lord

A few said such words and poems out of hyperbole and exaggeration, not that they truly considered him their God. In addition, it has been narrated from Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) himself that he said,

هَلَكَ فِيَّ رَجُلاَنِ: مُحِبٌّ غَالٍ وَمُبْغِضٌ قَالٍ.

"Two groups of people will be destroyed on my account: the friend who exaggerates (in his friendship and the enemy who dislikes me."[2]

In any case, throughout history there have been and there are individuals who have had exaggerated beliefs, though not all of them to the extent that they raise someone to the status of Allah. In any case, these ideas are a form of deviation from Islam and the proper Shi'a creeds. Such beliefs have more often been found among the Sufis, most of who are considered among the Ahl al-Sunnat; ideas such as transmigration (hulul), unity (ittihad), and so forth tend to be found in their writings.

Fortunately, thanks to the guidance of the Imams (peace be upon them), not only did

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Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۱, p. ۲۵۷ -۱

Nahj al-Balaghah, edited by Subhi al-Salih, Short Sayings, no. ۱۱۷ -۲

the issue of sufism not spread as much among the Shi'a as among the Ahl al-Sunnat, rather it was also repudiated and condemned by the Imams (peace be upon them), .their followers, and the major scholars

Thus, associating these issues to the Shi'a is slander; the Shi'a beliefs in regard to each of the issues of Divine unity, prophecy, Imamah, and resurrection are free of such exaggerated and devious matters, since the Imams (peace be upon them) as protectors of the Divine religion acted in such a way over two and half centuries as to close the path for idolatrous beliefs to penetrate, and the limits and boundaries of the fundamentals of Shi'a thought and doctrine became known. Afterwards, the scholars clearly explained all of these beliefs by compiling and writing books of doctrine, such .as the I`tiqadat of Majlisi

A small group of Sufis was indeed found among the Shi'a who put forth exaggerated beliefs in the name of wilayah and love of 'Ali (peace be upon him), and in every case with the efforts of the mindful 'Ulama appropriate answers were given them. As a .result, they were not able to offer much resistance

The Shi'a consider none a partner to Allah in the His qualities of Majesty and Beauty. They believe the Prophet and Imams (peace be upon them) to be creatures and worshippers of Allah who are in need of Allah from all aspects and regard only Allah as .free of need by His essence

,Of course, the qualities, distinctions

elevated status, and ranks of perfection that the Shi‘a mention for these personalities in accordance with reliable verses and traditions – for example they consider them the authority (hujjat), Imams, rulers (wali al-amr), and possessed of miracles – in no way have even the scent of exaggeration or polytheism. All of them represent the their perfection, apex of servitude, and degree of submission to the commandments of Allah.

In short, the principle of Imamah is one of the original principles of Islam that is understood from the verses of Qur’an and abundant traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) himself; passage of time, conquests, and defeats played no role in its spread and development.

In addition, belief in this principle does not necessitate any form of exaggerated beliefs. All of the qualities that the Imam, in accordance with the traditions, possesses are not incompatible with the Imam being a servant of Allah and, like the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), being in need of Allah.

وَلاَ يمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِهِ نَفْعًا وَلاَ ضَرًّا.

“And he controls neither his own benefit nor his loss.”(١)

In fact, the Imam is not even a prophet, meaning that a code of law and rules is not revealed to him, though he is muhaddath (addressed), meaning that angels speak with him. However, his relation to the angels is not like the relation of the prophet to the angel of revelation, who communicates the Divine commands to the prophet, since the principles of all

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۶, p. ۱۶۷, footnote ۷

the commands have previously been explained, and messengership and prophecy have been sealed with the demise of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family).

In recognizing the Imam, it is important that one recognize the Imams who were introduced and appointed to the Imamah by Allah through the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and regard them, like the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), as having general rule and absolute authority (wilayat) over all religious and worldly affairs, and as possessing, with the exception of the prophecy, all of the Prophet's qualities, like knowledge and infallibility. In short one must recognize the Imams (peace be upon them) as the true successors of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in both religious and mundane matters.

From the point of view of materialists and those who don't believe in the unseen world, belief in the unseen world, Divine religions, and the qualities which the faithful attribute to the prophets and friends of Allah are all mingled with exaggeration. Since the faithful believe in qualities, actions, and traits with respect to them that the materialist is unable to comprehend, he considers them to be the exaggerations of the believers with respect to the prophets and friends of Allah.

For example, from the materialists' point of view, the miracles of Ibrahim, Musa, and `Isa (peace be upon them), in which the faithful believe, are all a form of exaggeration, though no exaggeration exists in these beliefs.

All of these form a chain of realities that show the elevated status of their possessors. Exaggeration is to associate the Prophet or Imam with Allah, or regard Allah as unified .with them, and so forth

The Relation of the Shi‘a with the Mu‘tazilah

:Question

For what reason have the principles of religion been divided into five principles? Has ?the link of the Shi‘a with the Mu‘tazilah played any role in that

:Answer

The Shi‘a have conducted discussions and debates about Islamic issues with all sects, as mentioned in books of kalam (theology) and polemics. However, they have not influenced it with regard to any issues of creed. As we have mentioned numerous times, the Shi‘a school of thought is an original Islamic school of thought, though the .remaining sects appeared afterwards

The beliefs of the Shi‘a are not limited to these five principles, but rather comprise many other issues as well. Of course, in one exposition, the Islamic beliefs can be summarized into tawhid (Divine unity), nubuwwah (prophecy), and ma`ad (resurrection), or in tawhid and nubuwwah, since the remaining beliefs, such as Imamah (vicegerency) and resurrection are a part of the issues which the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) preached and informed about. And according to the narrations, faith in the prophecy consists of faith in all that the .Prophet conveyed

الإِيمَانُ بِالنُّبُوَّهِ إِيمَانٌ بِكُلِّ مَا أَنْبَأَ عَنْهُ النَّبِيُّ.

.Faith in the prophecy consists of faith in all that the Prophet conveyed

On this basis, these five principles – Divine unity, Divine justice, prophecy, Imamah, – and the resurrection

are among the principles in which all Muslims must believe. Reason and revelation also affirm them. Summarizing the beliefs in these five principles is because the Shi'a regard the issue of Divine justice and the Imamah as important as the remaining .principles of belief, but Ahl al-Sunnat – the Ash`ari sect – do not believe in them

The Shi'a have taken the Islamic beliefs directly from the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet and Imams (peace be upon them) and have not been influenced by the Mu'tazilah with respect to any of their beliefs, since the Mu'tazilah .sect came into being afterwards

If we see that the Mu'tazilah share the Shi'a view in some issues, what is proper is that we say that they have taken these views from the Shi'a Imams either directly or indirectly. The well-known proverb, "Belief in coercion and anthropomorphism is ",Umayyad and belief in Justice and unity is an Alawi doctrine

الجَبْرُ وَالتَّشبِيهُ أَمَوِيَّان وَالْعَدْلُ وَالتَّوحِيدُ عَلَوِيَّان

.confirms this claim

In spite of this, some writers who are ignorant of the Shi'a school of thought and have researched the Mu'tazili and Ash'ari sects have assumed the Shi'a scholars, among them Sayyid Murta¤a, were Mu'tazili since they found them opposed to some Ash'ari .beliefs

Part ٢: Imamah

The Secret of Choosing the Imams

:Question

What was the secret of appointing the Imams (peace be upon them) to the position of ?Imamah and wilayah? Is human intellect able to understand this

:Answer

This question is not exclusive to the appointment of the Imams (peace be upon them), but

can be brought up regarding the selection of all the prophets and even angels such as Jibra'il, the Trustee of revelation, and regarding the superiority of some prophets over others and some nations and individuals over others, and in the same way about the superiority of humanity over many other types of creation.

The reality is that selection is among the acts of Allah, as numerous verses indicate:

إِنَّ اللهَ اصْطَفَى آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ.

"Verily Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim, and the family of `Imran over all people."(١)

قُلِ الحَمْدُ للهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَى.

"Say: Praise be to Allah and peace be with those of His servants whom He has chosen."(٢)

يَا مَرْيَمَ إِنَّ اللهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ.

"O' Maryam! Verily Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you over all the ladies of the world."(٣)

إِنَّ اللهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ.

"Surely Allah has chosen him over you."(۴)

إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي.

"(O' Musa) verily I have chosen you over mankind with my communications."(۵)

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا.

"Then We gave the book in inheritance to those of Our servants whom We had chosen."(۶)

Even Mansur, the 'Abbasid caliph, would say that Imam Ja'far al-as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was among those denoted by the verse:

اَلَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

"those of Our servants whom We have chosen."(۷)

وَلَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا.

"And verily We chose him in this world."(۸)

اَللُّه يَصْطَفِى مِنَ المَلاَئِكَهِ رُسُلاً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ.

"Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and mankind."(۹)

وَإِنهَّمْ عِنْدَنَا لِمَنَ المُصْطَفَينَ الأَخْيَارِ.

"And verily with

۱- Surah Ali-Imran (۳), Verse ۳۳

۲- Surah al-Naml (۲۷), Verse ۵۹

۳- Surah Ali-Imran (۳), Verse ۴

۴- Surah al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۲۴۷

۵- Surah al-A`raf (۷), Verse ۱۴۴

۶- Surah al-Fatir (۳۵), Verse ۳۲

۷- Surah al-Fatir (۳۵), Verse ۳۲

۸- Surah al-Baqara (۲), Verse ۱۳۰

۹- Surah al-Hajj (۲۲), Verse ۷۵

(Us they are from among the chosen and righteous ones."(1)

وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا.

"And from among those whom We guided and chose."(2)

وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ.

"And We chose them and guided them."(3)

وَلكِنَّ اللهَ يَجْتَبى مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ.

"But Allah chooses whom He wishes among His messengers" (and conveys to them those hidden realities which are necessary for their leadership position).(4)

اَللهُ يَجْتَبى إِلَيْهِ مَن يَشَاءُ.

"Allah chooses whomsoever He wishes."(5)

وَكَذلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ.

"And thus does thy Lord choose thee."(6)

and many more verses, all of which indicate that selection is one of the acts of Allah ... in His wisdom, or rather is one of the Divine manners of conduct.

There is a treatise by Zaid al-Shahid, the son of Imam Zain al-'Abidin (peace be upon him), called al-Safwah in which he has studied the issue of the selection of the Ahl al-Bait.

The issue of granting rank exists in the natural world as well, and its necessity is entirely understandable by reason. Just as all species cannot belong to the human species, and all organs cannot be the eyes or head or brain, and all fruits and plants cannot be berries and squash, and the entire tree cannot be the branch, leaves, or roots, in the same way, all individuals cannot be perfect in their manners, qualities, and features. That is, all cannot be Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), 'Ali (peace be upon him), Ibrahim al-Khalil (peace be upon him), or Musa al-Kalim

.((peace be upon him

The issue of being an Imam or a follower (ma'mum) as

۱- Surah Sad (۳۸), Verse ۴۷

۲- Surah Maryam (۱۹), Verse ۵۸

۳- Surah al-An`am (۶), Verse ۸

۴- Surah Ali-Imran (۳), Verse ۱۷۹

۵- Surah ash-Shura (۴۲), Verse ۱۳

۶- Surah Yusuf (۱۲), Verse ۶

well is such that it is either through Allah's decree and natural causes or through direct specification and selection by Allah. In any case, all of these are signs that are .laden with secrets and wisdom which only Allah Himself knows

In these affairs none has the right to say, "Why was I not made into someone or something else?" or, for example, "How come all the angels were not made Jibra'il al-Amin (the Trustworthy) and all people were not made Muhammad al-Mustafa (the Chosen)?" or "Why weren't all of the world's mountains and rocks made of gold?" If such a thing were to happen, the perfection of the world would become subject to defect and the order and coordination existing among its various parts would cease to .exist

This is though the Noble Qur'an itself speaks thus about the order and minute :coordination existing among the parts of the universe

وَالشَّمْسُ تجَرِی لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لهَاَ ذلِکَ تَقْدِیرُ الْعَزِیزِ الْعَلِیمِ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتىَّ عَادَ کَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِیمِ لاَ الشَّمْسُ یَنْبَغِی لهَاَ أَنْ تُدْرِکَ الْقَمَرَ وَلاَ اللَّیْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَکُلٌّ فیِ فَلَکٍ یَسْبَحُونَ.

And the sun travels in its appointed path; that is the decree of the Mighty, the" Knowing. And We have appointed phases for the moon until it becomes like an old, yellow, date branch. Neither is it appropriate for the sun to overtake the moon, nor (does the night overtake the day; and all float in their orbit."(۱

—Everything in the world is in its place"

If you look well, nothing is more

p: ۴۶

Surah Yasin (۳۶), Verses ۳۸-۴۰ -۱

or less

—All Divine decrees are just and wise

"Our intellects can't fathom the secrets of creation

While the human world is a world of choice and selection, the secrets of these matters – i.e. Divine decrees and selection are so complex that it can be said that even if humanity were to conduct research and studies for millions of years to come, they would still be faced with many unknown secrets.

In summary, the world of creation is a world of causes and effects, and at the same time the human world is a world of choice and duty.

The wise Divine decrees and ordinances govern all affairs. Understanding the reasons for selection of an Imam or prophet and its creational and discretionary aspects, and other such issues, requires an intimate knowledge of all the secrets of Divine actions and the universe. Only those who have come under Allah's special guardianship understand the fine points of these matters, and all of the prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) were as such.

All human individuals have been encouraged by various means to strive to gain mastery over the sun and moon, and so forth, and since Allah has made them subservient to humanity, they can try to comprehend the secrets of things and make use of their benefits; but if they are unable to understand something's cause or causes, they must regard it as a Divine decree and make use of its existential blessings.

Thus, it is our duty to make use of the teachings and

guidance of the prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) and regard the blessing of their existence and guidance among the greatest of Divine blessings and make them our role-models. And if we are unable to comprehend the philosophy of the selection of these true Divine proofs with our imperfect intellects, we must not turn to rejecting or opposing them. Otherwise, we will be regarded as among those people who in the era of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) himself denied – either out of ignorance or with ulterior motives – that the selection of the progeny :was Divine. The Noble Qur'an, in the course of a verse, mentions them as follows

أَمْ يَحْسَدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا.

Or are they envious of the people (the Prophet and his progeny) on account of what" Allah has granted them out of His abundance? Verily, we granted the family of (Ibrahim the Book and wisdom and granted them a great kingdom."(١

According to the Qur'anic commentaries, this verse was revealed about them. It is incumbent upon us to understand, through reflection and contemplation of the circumstances of the universe, that everything is found in its particular place and the Divine knowledge and wisdom is evident in all of the great and small creations of the Lord of the Universe. Therefore, precisely as we read in one of the verses of the ,Noble Qur'an

اَللهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ.

Allah best"

Surah an-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۵۴ -۱

(knows where to place His messengership."(1)

Thus, selection of the prophets and Divine legatees is among the affairs that, like all the other actions of the Lord of the Universe, are possessed of their own particular wisdom, though humanity with its imperfect knowledge and intellect may be unable to fathom its secrets and complexities.

Allah's Knowledge and the Infallibles' (peace be upon them) Knowledge of the Unseen

Question:

Shed some light on the knowledge of the unseen of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and the pure Imams (peace be upon them). And in this regard, considering the principle that Allah has no partner in His knowledge and other attributes of perfection and beauty, explain the difference between Allah's and the Imam's knowledge and between the Imam's and the Prophet's knowledge.

Answer:

Anyone who studies the books of history, traditions, and biographies will not doubt the fact that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and the pure Imams (peace be upon them) made known many unseen matters, most of which took place in the world within a short period.

These reports, especially what has come down from the person of the noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), are great in number, and each one of them is considered a part of the major miracles of this house.

In fact, as affirmed by individuals like Ibn Khaldun, in many instances Imam Ja`far al-as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) would give news about unseen matters. Of course, the difference between Allah's knowledge of

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1- Suurah al-An`am (6), Verse 124

the unseen and that of these personages is that Allah's knowledge is by essence, while the knowledge of the Prophet or Imam is outside of their essence, that is, it has .been granted them by Allah

Allah is unique, peerless, and independent of others in all His attributes of perfection, but the Prophet and Imam are in need of Allah with respect to their knowledge and all other attributes of perfection which they possess; and in a word, everything they have, whether from the aspect of existence or attributes, is from Allah. They are .existent through Him and knowledgeable and possessed of power through Him

However, the difference between the Prophet and Imam with regard to awareness of unseen matters is from the aspect that in the Prophet's knowledge, no human being is an intermediary between him and the unseen world, while the Imams (peace be upon him) have acquired a portion of this knowledge through the Prophet (peace be upon .(him and his family

In any case, what is certain is the knowledge of those personages and their giving news about unseen matters, which is as clear and sure as the sun shining in the .center of the sky

In this regard, if one wants to find out in more depth about the reports of the unseen, .(he should refer to books of the lives and history of the Imams (peace be upon them

According to the level of my own understanding, I have offered explanations, though concise, in the books The Radiance of

.Wilayat, Commentary on Dua' al-Nudbah, and Creational and Legal Wilayat

The Countenance of the Imams' (peace be upon them) Conduct

:Question

Why were the conduct, manner, and methods of the Imams (peace be upon them) not ?the same in regard to performance of their duty

:Answer

Contrary to what is said, the conduct of the Imams (peace be upon them) in confronting various events that were similar to an extent was not very divergent, since all of their conduct was within the scope of the principles and agenda of Shiaism, which are the original principles of Islam itself. All of their actions and programs demonstrated the truth of Islam and its redemptive teachings. And if we see that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon them) each acted in one way in one important phase of their noble lives and in another way in another phase, this is in entirety a result of the commandments of .Islam and the Qur'an

;This is because Islam has both the command

إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً.

except that you protect themselves from them (and practice dissimulation for the ...“ (sake of more important goals).”(۱)

and the command

إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ.

(except one who is compelled while his heart is tranquil with faith.”(۲ ...“

And it also has the command

جاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وااغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ.

(Struggle against the disbelievers and hypocrites and be harsh towards them."(۳"

as well as

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ.

Act with compassion and accept their excuse, and command towards goodness, and" turn away from the ignorant (and

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Surah Ali-Imran (۳), Verse ۲۸ -۱
Surah al-Nahl (۱۶), Verse ۱۰۶ -۲
Surah al-Tahrim (۶۶), Verse ۹ -۳

(fight them not)."(1)

وَلاَ تَسْتَوِى الحَسَنَهُ وَلاَ السَّيِّئَهُ إِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِىَ أَحْسَنُ.

"Nor are good and evil alike; repel evil with what is most good."(2)

Likewise, the Qur'an says

فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ.

"So whoever transgresses with respect to you, transgress with respect to him in a like manner."(3)

And it also says with regard to executing the punishment for adulterers:

وَلاَ تَأْخُذْكُمْ بهِمَا رَأْفَهٌ فِي دِينِ اللهِ.

"And let not compassion for them overtake you in executing Allah's command."(4)

Overall, the conditions and situation of the Imam's (peace be upon them) era demanded the very same form of conduct for the protection of the Islamic principles and the essence of Shiaism that they in practice adopted, and of course the Shi'a must follow the path of true Islam, which the Imam recognizes better than all else and doesn't deviate from even an inch.

The Limits of the Imam's Leadership

Question:

Just as the range of the Imam's leadership includes guidance of the people, elucidation of religious rulings, exegesis of the Qur'an, and answering objections, it also includes political issues, protecting the order of society, implementing Islamic rules, establishing justice, ensuring security, and protecting the borders of Islam.

Please explain the relationship of these two parts with the principle of Imamah and explain to what extent Shi'a have accepted this issue.

Answer:

As has been indicated, their range of leadership includes both parts, and in reality these two parts are inseparable. However, the issue that was the focus of attention and covetousness of usurping politicians and oppressors was political leadership and taking

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Surah al-A`raf (۷), Verse ۱۹۹ -۱

Surah al-Fussilat (۴۱), Verse ۳۴ -۲

Surah al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۹۴ -۳

Surah al-Nur (۲۴), Verse ۲ -۴

.control of the leadership of society

Thus, their opposition to the Imams (peace be upon them) was focused on this aspect, and if they opposed them from the aspect of guidance in religious affairs – that is, if they entered the field by making institutions of learning, libraries, and schools – this was so that the people would feel less of a need for the guidance of the Imams (peace be upon them), and as a result, distance themselves from them, in order that they do not come under the effect of the spiritual and religious training of .(the Imams (peace be upon them

Again, it was for this very reason that they feared the Imams' becoming well-known in intellectual and social circles, since they used to observe that the becoming known of their intellectual ability and enlightening guidance occasioned the progress and mastery of Shi'a thought and the people's increased inclination towards the Ahl al-.(Bait (peace be upon them

The fact that in books of kalam, Imamah has been defined, in the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), as "authority over all religious and worldly affairs of humanity" shows that in this definition their attention was primarily to the Imam's authority over social affairs and his vicegerency of the Prophet in governing. This is because the dimension of the leadership and authority of the Imams in religious and spiritual matters and the intellectual eminence of the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) were undeniable. Since enlightenment and

guidance of people in religious and spiritual affairs was not linked to political issues, it was not opposed by the power-seekers.

And even if they desired to oppose them in this aspect, the people would not have accepted it, since the people were aware of their intellectual ability.

From the meaning of the word "wilayah" (authority), primarily the leadership and administration of social affairs, governing, and maintaining order are understood.

Verses of the Qur'an and many traditions, such as the mutawatir tradition of Ghadir also support this understanding. The following two verses are an example:

إِنمَّاَ وَلِيُّكُمُ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وُالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَوهَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَوهَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ.

"Your wali is none but Allah and His messenger and the believers, those who establish the prayers and pay the poor-rate while they kneel (in their prayers)."(1)

أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you (the Prophet's legatees)."(2)

The word Imamah also indicates the aspect of spiritual Imamah and intellectual and religious leadership to the same degree, as the following verse expresses:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّهً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الخَيرَاتِ.

"And we made them leaders who guide at our command, and we revealed to them the performance of virtuous deeds."(3)

In addition to these, many other verses and traditions such as the tradition of thaqalayn, safinah, aman, and other traditions indicate this point. Thus, it has come in the tradition of thaqalayn:

"Do not precede the Ahl al-Bait, and do not go before them."

In other words, be their followers. If greater

Surah al-Ma'idah (۵), Verse ۵۵ -۱

Surah an-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۵۹ -۲

Surah al-Anbiya' (۲۱), Verse ۷۳ -۳

attention is paid to the content of the mentioned verses and traditions, it will become known that they indicate both dimensions of leadership; thus the Shi'a have always considered the Imam the possessor of both positions, political leadership, and .spiritual leadership, and have considered others to be usurpers

The usurping rulers also knew this reality – that according the Shi'a, the Imam's leadership is absolute – and thus, occasionally though they were confident that the Imam of the time did not intend to rise, they would act cautiously. As an example, Mansur had this belief with regard to Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him). Still, he wouldn't abandon precaution, always kept the Imam under the surveillance of his secret officers, and would create difficulties for him in various ways. In the end he was still unable to bear the existence of the Imam, since he viewed the method the Imam had adopted as dangerous for his government; for this very reason he .martyred him

Harun adopted the same method. He held Imam Musa al-Kazim (peace be upon him) in prisons and under surveillance for many years, since he knew the Shi'a consider .both positions of spiritual and worldly leadership as belonging to the Imam

As opposed to this, the role and conduct of the Imams (peace be upon them), which was a cause of the protection of Shi'a thought and Islamic laws, was very important. It is possible to regard it as their miracle, and such action was not possible except through special

.Divine instruction

Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) and Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) adopted their particular policies, while Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) undertook his great uprising. In the same way, the remaining Imams (peace be upon them) each acted in a particular fashion. If they were not to do so, no path or method opposed to those tyrannous policies would be able to survive under such annihilating strikes; yet we see that the school of Shiaism survived and even until today is known in the world as the .symbol of true Islam and the herald of a just world government

One point worth noting is that all of the Imams (peace be upon him) would promise that spiritual, intellectual, and practical leadership would in the future – in the age of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) (peace be upon him) – be united with political leadership, which hitherto was usurped by the oppressive .rulers, and under the shadow of that leadership, all of Islam's goals will be achieved

The Number of the Shi'a Imams

:Question

As we know, the true Twelver Imami sect is called "twelver" (ithna `ashariyya) since its followers believe that after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), his successors were twelve people. And among all of his 'ummah (community), they are the sole group who hold this belief; thus, the traditions about the twelve Imams which both Shi'a and Sunnis have narrated – and whose origin from the Prophet (peace be upon

him and his family) is undeniable – can only be applied to the Shi'a sect among all Muslims. Naturally, the true sect will be limited to this group. In spite of all this, it is said that from some traditions – a few of which have been narrated in the book of Sulaim – it is possible to understand that the number of the Imams is thirteen, and this view has also been attributed to Ibn Sahl al-Nawbakhti. If, as it is said, a tradition with this content exists (or if Nawbakhti himself held this view, though this appears ?unlikely), how can it be explained and affirmed

:Answer

We have given sufficient explanation about the tradition or traditions that indicate that the number of Imams (peace be upon them) is thirteen in the treatise "Clarity of Vision for One Who Follows the Twelve Imams." There, we have clarified that the a tradition with this meaning does not exist; moreover, even if such a tradition were to exist, it is a tradition with a single narrator and with regard to principles of religion, beliefs, and issues in which attaining certainty is essential, traditions with single .narrators are not relied upon

In such an instance, only a firm rational argument or a tradition that is consecutively narrated (mutawatir) and certain to have originated from an infallible can be relied .upon

Furthermore, traditions that are mutawatir and have even passed the limits of tawatur (consecutive narration) indicate that the number of the Imams is twelve. In such

a situation, if a single non-certain tradition is found in opposition to all these traditions, what creditability can it have, and how can a researcher rely on it? In addition, in the Musnad of Ahmad alone, it has been narrated through thirty-odd chains of narrators from the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) that the number of Imams (peace be upon them) is twelve, and in the Sahih of Muslim this point has been narrated through eight chains, and likewise in the remaining collections, Sahihs, Sunans (books of the sunnah), and books of the Ahl al-Sunnat, this topic has been .referred to numerous times

In Shi'a books as well traditions have been narrated with hundreds of chains that the Imams will be twelve, all of which were narrated by well-known companions and followers (tabi`in) up to two centuries before the birth of the twelfth Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) (peace be upon him), and in reality this is counted as a .type of prediction and information about the future

In spite of all this, it was said that a tradition has been narrated from Sulaim that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon ".him): "You and twelve people from your progeny are the true Imams

The reality is that in the present text and the reliable texts that before our time were in the possession of the scholars, this tradition did not exist. Moreover, there are many traditions in

the book of Sulaim ibn Qays itself that explicitly mention the Imams and their names as twelve people, and have specified the names of those twelve personages from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) to Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) .(peace be upon him) in the same order in which the Shi'a believe

This book, written in the first century after the Hijra, is reliable and the sum of its material clearly establishes the truth of the Imami school, since it contains news about Imams who were not even born in that time. Firm signs and evidence indicates .the correctness of this book

Now, if we suppose the book contains such a tradition, that tradition can be interpreted in light of other books of traditions. That is, the intent of the tradition is to indicate the number of the Imams and that they are from the progeny of 'Ali (peace be upon him), and since the majority – eleven out of twelve – of the Imams are from his progeny, it was explained in these words – which, it is likely, have not even been .narrated in entirety

Ibn Nadim attributed this view opposing the traditions regarding twelve Imams to Abu Sahl Nawbakhti, which appears not to be correct, since Abu Sahl Nawbakhti is not a person to express such an opinion, which has no evidence worthy of consideration. In Shi'a books of biographies and rijal (biographies of the narrators of hadith), in which the Nawbakhti family has been mentioned in

detail, such a view has not been related regarding Abu Sahl in the section pertaining to him or to others, all have praised his school of thought, belief, and action. It appears these are the same types of mistakes that occur in the books of biographies .and sects, and the writers of which have passed over them out of carelessness

Attributing such baseless beliefs to well-known individuals has no result other than to .mislead uninformed or ill-informed people

In any case, the issue of Mahdawiyyah (messianism) and concealment and the remaining issues exclusive to the twelfth Imam (peace be upon him) have been in discussion since the beginning of Islam. Rather, in accordance to what is in the extant Torah and Bible, the precedent of this belief has roots in Divine religions previous to .Islam and in the Old and New Testaments

(Principality of Reason or Narration in Specifying the Imam (peace be upon him

:Question

In the issue of Imamah, between reason and narration, which is given precedence? In other words, are the issues pertaining to the topic of Imamah primarily provable ?through intellectual proofs or narrated proofs

:Answer

As can be understood from the question itself, issues are of two types. One type are the issues that are ascertained through reason and are accepted through application of logical procedures and intellectual proofs, such as proving the existence of Allah, His essential attributes of perfection, and the necessity of prophecy, i.e. the proof of prophecy in general. The other type are those issues that are proved solely through narration, meaning that there is no way of

proving them except revelation and relation by a truthful relater, that is, a prophet or Imam whose prophecy or Imamah is already established. Among these issues, there are also some issues that can be established in both ways. Of course, in this case the .narrated proofs are a form of guidance towards the intellectual proofs

The researcher must be well attentive to this aspect of issues and must see which discussion can be established through reason, which through narration alone, and which through both methods. And in each case, he should commence according to the method peculiar to that issue so that he can reach an appropriate conclusion. Otherwise, if he wishes to enter into an exclusively narrational issue through reason, .it is natural that he will not reach a valid conclusion

It is possible that some may raise a question regarding whether the principality of reason takes precedence in the issue of Imamah over the principality of narration or .not

The answer is that that in the issue of Imamah, like the issue of prophecy and the conditions of a prophet, proving the principle of general Imamah, i.e. proving the principle of a need for the existence of the Imam and the conditions of the Imam, is accomplished through reasoning. Of course, if the issue of Imamah were among the issues that are outside the limits of understanding of human reason and reasoning did not understand it independently, it could be proved by narrational evidence alone, i.e. .the guidance of the Prophet

This is because reliance on narrational evidence with regard to the principle of Imamah, as opposed to the principle of prophecy, does not involve circular reasoning, .though in the issue of prophecy it involves circular reasoning

Thus, the narrational proofs of Imamah can also be regarded, similar to the .narrational proofs of the principle of prophecy, as guidance to the decree of reason

Issues such as the necessity of infallibility, how the Imam is appointed, and the fact that this affair has not been delegated to the people are principles pertaining to .reason. And existing narrational proofs affirm this decree of reason

It is obvious that with groups who, like the Asha'ira, do not believe in rational good and evil, discussion can only be held through those narrational proofs. Some of the effects and benefits of the existence of the Imam and his distinctions can only be proved through narrational proofs, just as these effects and unique traits are proved .for the Prophet through narrational proofs

In the issue of the specific Imamah (the Imamah of a particular person) as well, like the specific prophecy in which explicit declaration by the previous prophet is a proof of the prophecy of the following prophet, the prophet's declaration of the Imam's Imamah and likewise the declaration by the previous Imam of the Imamah of the following Imam is a proof of his Imamah. There is this difference that the principle way of establishing prophecy is a miracle, since the only true way to establish the prophecy

of the first prophet is through a miracle and this is the only reliable evidence of the claim of prophecy, though the prophets after his prophecy can be established both by declaration of the previous prophets and by miracle, and the Divine way has also been to send prophets along with miracles, since the establishment of prophecy through a miracle is comprehensible by all.

However, the method of declaration by the previous prophet is only an authoritative proof for believers in that previous prophet. It is for this reason that we say that the method of establishment by miracle is a general way, which is an authoritative proof for all. Still, establishing the occurrence of a miracle at the hands of a prophet is limited to narrational methods for one who is absent from the time and place of occurrence of the miracle. Certainly, the Glorious Qur'an is the only miracle whose establishment has no need of narrational proofs, since it is existent, just as the explicit declaration of the Qur'an that it is impossible to bring its like indicates that it is a miracle.

In the issue of Imamah, the Imamah of the first Imam is established solely by the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) declaration, and since it has been proven in the discussion of general Imamah that the Imamah of the Imam is through specification by the Prophet by command of Allah, the miracle that is manifested by the Imam, just as it is an independent

proof of the truth of claim of Imamah, is also a proof of the declaration of the prophet, if such a declaration by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is not in our hands. Reliance on rational proofs in the issue of specific Imamah is in order to establish the existence of a specific declaration.

For example: it can be said that it is obligatory for the prophet, in that Allah, in his absolute wisdom, has commanded the prophet to explicitly declare the Imamah, to specify and introduce the Imam after himself, even if that declaration is no longer accessible by us or has become ambiguous or its purport has become subject to doubt. Since the claim of a declaration has not been made except with regard to a specific personality – Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) – rationally, the person specified by Allah and the Prophet is not other than 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him).

Or it can be said that since the condition of the Imam – who is appointed by Allah and the prophet to lead humankind in religious and worldly affairs – is infallibility, and the claim of infallibility has not been made for anyone except 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), rationally 'Ali ibn Abi Taib (peace be upon him) is the appointed and infallible Imam.

Similarly, with regard to the twelfth Imam it is said that according to narrational proofs, the world is never without

an Imam and Proof (hujjat) of Allah – apparent or hidden – and in this long period of over a thousand years, the chain of Imamah is not to be severed. And since the claim of Imamah has not been forwarded for anyone other than that personage, or if it has been made its invalidity has been proved, aside from him, who is in concealment, no one else is the Imam and he is the Imam. And if he is not the Imam, other objections .discussed previously in the issue of the general Imamah will once again arise

This is though there is no justification for raising them, since the result of such discussions leads to matters such as the performance of evil by Allah, the Wise, and .so forth, from the like of which Allah's essence is pure and free

[(SECTION[Messianism (Mahdawiyyah$$

Original Source of Belief in Imamah and Faith in The Appearance of the Twelfth Imam ((peace be upon him

:Question

From which Islamic sources has the position and esteem (i`tibar) of the Imamah and leadership and faith in the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) been understood? And what effect have events and the passage of time had on the ?completion of this principle

:Answer

According to a verse of Qur'an, Imamah is a station that was granted to Ibrahim al-Khalil (peace be upon him) after that great test—trial by kalimat (words)(۱). According to traditions that are consecutively narrated (mutawatir) and which both Shi'a and Sunnis have related, this station was also placed in the Ahl al-Bait of the Prophet ((peace be upon him and his family

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۱ - Surah al-Baqara (۲), Verse ۱۲۴: "When his Lord tried Ibrahim by words, then he ".completed them

.and they have been singled out for this great Divine grant

On this basis it has been established that in every era an individual from this family who possesses the necessary capabilities, including knowledge and infallibility, will be .responsible for the station of Imamah and leadership

Such an individual is the proof (hujjat) of Allah, equal of the Qur'an, guide of the people, and protector of the religion and Divine law. Imamah is a principle that has been established from the time of the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) until our time and will continue from our time until the end of the world. The point of its apparent perfection and complete flowering will be during the age of the gladdening reappearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) and establishment of his united just world government, during which the world will be filled with equity, justice, goodness, and blessings through the blossoming of all human potentials and evolution of thoughts and becoming apparent of terrestrial and .celestial blessings

The agenda of forming a new world community which must end in spreading justice and the sovereignty of tawhid (Divine unity) is understood from the core of Islamic teachings. The Noble Qur'an in several chapters has announced this and hundreds of prophetic traditions have related the world's adoption of Islam and the government of justice and establishment of complete security in the land after the reappearance of the promised Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), who is from

the descendents of 'Ali and Fatimah (peace be upon her) and shares the name and .(agnomen (kunya) of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family

Belief in the appearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) with the mentioned qualities is something which has been mentioned in Islam's primary texts. According to consecutively-narrated (mutawatir) traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) has given news of this blessed event and requested his .'ummat (community) to be in wait of that consequential day

Though the issue of appearance is deduced from the general tidings pertaining to Islam's becoming supreme in the world and truth overcoming falsehood, this does not mean that the issue of appearance is solely a concept deduced from the purport of traditions, since the text and very words of narrations point to it independently, and most of the faithful rely one these very texts that explicitly point to the appearance of .Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) and its signs

Once it is known that the foundation of the existence of this belief is the general tidings and texts of traditions, it can be said that historical conditions and events that occurred after the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had no role in its .coming into existence

This is because the origin of this idea is the era of prophecy and the traditions related to it exceed one thousand traditions, which are narrated in books traditions, commentary, and many other books. Prominent Sunni

scholars have also written independent books about it, and books written more than twelve centuries ago by the greatest experts and researches of Islamic sciences clearly indicate that the person of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) gave tidings about the issue of the appearance of the Promised Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), and his companions, the followers (tabi`in) of the companions, and .after them other generations of people have narrated them

(The Qur'an and Messianism (Mahdawiyyat

:Question

Which verse of the Noble Qur'an can be cited regarding the authority (wilayat) of the twelve Imams (peace be upon them) and the just government of Imam Mahdi (may ?Allah hasten his return) and the supremacy of Islam over the world

:Answer

The verses from whose purport it is understood that the twelve Imams—may Allah .elevate their word—have authority and Imamah are many in number

:Among them is the verse

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

(You are but a warner, and every people has a guide."(١"

:And the verse

لاَ يَنَالُ عَهْدِی الظَّالِمِينَ

My covenant reaches not the oppressors (and only that group of your descendants is" (worthy of this position who are pure and infallible)."(٢

:and the verse

أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِی إِلَی الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يَتَّبِعَ

(Thus is one who guides to the truth worthier of being followed?"(٣"

These verses indicate this point since from them one understands that society is not without an Imam, the infallibility of the holder of the station of Imamah, and his being more knowledgeable than others, and this issue is among the exclusive convictional principles of the

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Surah Ra'd (۱۳), Verse ۷ -۱

Surah Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۲۴ -۲

Surah Yunus (۱۰), Verse ۳۵ -۳

:Shi'a. And from the verse

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِى الأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

O' ye who have brought faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in" (authority among you (the trustees of the Prophet)."(۱)

This doctrine of the Shi'a—that the Imam and ruler must be infallible—is understood. This is because in this verse obedience to those in authority has been commanded in an absolute manner. Obedience to the Prophet, which is in all affairs, has been expressed together with obedience to those in authority in one word—the imperative "!obey" ,أطيعوا verb

It is obvious that someone whom the believers have been ordered to obey absolutely in such a way must be infallible and far removed from errors and mistakes, and as it is undisputed that from among the Islamic sects only the Shi'a believe in the infallibility .of the Imam

In addition to this, commentaries and reliable traditions also indicate that the intent of the noble verse "Obey Allah..." and other verses is the twelve Imams (peace be upon them), and in these commentaries, the blessed names of these personages are also .mentioned explicitly

As for the supremacy of Islam in the world and its overcoming all religions, it is sufficient to pay attention to verses ۳۲ and ۳۳ of Surah at-Tawba, verse ۲۸ of Surah al-Fath, verses ۶ and ۸ of Surah al-Saff, and numerous other verses. In them, the promise of appearance and true religion's overcoming all religions has been given, a promise that will come to pass with

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Surah an-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۵۹ -۱

.the appearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), and this is inviolable

In regard to the appearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) in particular, many verses have been elucidated to refer to it, which exceed one hundred verses in all. The book Al-Mahajja fi ma Nazala fi al-Qa'im al-Hujja (The Final Destination Regarding What Has Been Revealed About the Twelfth Imam) has .collected all of them

:Among those verses is this verse

وَعَدَ اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِى ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِى لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِى شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الفَاسِقُونَ

Allah has promised those who have believed among you and do good deeds that He" shall certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them and shall make firm for them their religion which He has chosen for them and shall change their fear into security; they will worship Me and associate none with Me, and (whoever disbelieves after that, it is they who are the iniquitous."(١

:and this verse

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِى الأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ

And we desire bestow a favor on those deemed weak in the land and make them" (leaders and make them inheritors."(٢

:and the verse

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِى الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِى الصَّالِحُونَ

And verily We have written in the Zabur (Psalms) after the Remembrance that my" (righteous servants will inherit the earth."(٣

Surah Nur (٢۴), Verse ۵۵ -١

Surah Qasas (٢٨), Verse ٥ -٢

Surah al-Anbiya' (٢١), Verse١٠٥ -٣

Belief in the Appearance of the Mahdi and Savior and the Appearance of False Mahdis

:Question

Belief in the appearance of the Mahdi and savior has caused the appearance of false Mahdis throughout history, and some make this circumstance a justification for ?setting aside this idea. To what extent can this viewpoint be accepted

:Answer

This viewpoint is absolutely unacceptable, or else humanity must set aside all positive viewpoints. This is because all of them have more or less been subject to misuse. All of the individuals who claimed to be God or regarded themselves the manifestation of God, united with God, or regarded God to have taken abode in them have all misused .the principle of belief in Allah. This action in no way harms the issue of belief in Allah

Similarly, all of the false prophets who claimed prophecy and misled a people do not transmit any damage to the correctness of the principle of prophecy. This issue arises in more or less every field and industry, but that incident brings no harm to that field .itself

In short, if any name or word that has a good and attractive meaning has been used for its opposite, this does not damage these values and good affairs themselves, such as if a betrayer has been called trustworthy, an oppressor called just, an ignorant person called learned, a sinner called God-fearing, or if all treacheries and .oppressions have been committed in the name of well-wishing and seeking reform

The Effect of Social, Economic, and Political Factors in Religious Thought

:Question

What effect have social, economic, and political factors had on religious thoughts and creeds and on belief in the appearance

?(of the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return

:Answer

From the viewpoint of the godless worldview, all affairs must be attributed to .historical and material causes

However, from the viewpoint of the religious worldview, the source of that which is genuine and true from among various ideas and creeds is revelation, the call of the prophets, and the inborn comprehension of humanity, which is referred to as the .guidance of reason, natural disposition, revelation, and prophecy

In the eyes of this viewpoint, all of the devious courses and harmful thoughts are the effect of material and historical causes, personal goals, and deficiency of culture of society and its upbringing. Religious creeds taken from revelation and prophecy are .all genuine and actual and have a place in humanity's nature

History, the passage of time, human knowledge, and material causes do not bring them into existence. Rather, the source of conviction about matters such as the principle of the messengership of the prophets and Imamah of the Imams (peace be upon them) and all true creeds is reason, human disposition, and revelation from .Allah

On this basis, no social, economical, or political factor has had or has an effect even in the appearance of belief in the appearance of Mahdi the Savior (may Allah hasten his return). The beginning and source of it is the narrations of the prophets, the celestial books, and the guidance, narrations, and words of the person of the Final Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), Imam Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon

.(him), and the remaining Imams (peace be upon them

Though there have been false claims regarding being the Mahdi based on seeking rank and political aims, by analysis and recognition the original source of the appearance of these claims and the appearance of false claimants we reach the reality that an uncontested reality has been involved around which these claims and .distortions have come about and been made tools by individuals

In the same way, regarding belief in Allah, revelation, and prophecy itself we see that some realities exist and there is a ground for its acceptance in people's harts, and opportunistic individuals, abusing this fact, have throughout history made claims of .Godhead or prophecy

And the issue of the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) as well—since it was raised by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) himself and the companions have .heard and related it from him—is a reality which has been accepted by all

For this reason it has been abused and individuals have made it means for differing .objectives, most of which have been political

If the issue of the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) did not have reality, individuals would not have resorted to such distortion with regard to it. Thus, these abuses .themselves confirm the fact that this issue has been accepted as a reality by all

It is possible for events to guide humanity to realities, just as Ibrahim (peace be upon him), the great monotheist, taught recognition of Allah to people by use

.of events

When night set, that personage saw a star. In the beginning, he said, “This is my ;Lord.” But when the star set he said

لَا أُحِبُّ الآفِلِينَ

“(I love not those that set.”(۱)

By making use of the incident of the rising and setting of the star, Ibrahim (peace be .upon him) taught people that the star cannot be God

After that, the moon also rises and sets, and from this incident as well he concludes .that the moon, too, cannot be God

Then, the sun rises and sets and, in the same way, he reaches the same conclusion .about it

In this way he seeks aversion to all polytheistic beliefs and guides the people to the .Creator of all the world’s inhabitants

Thus, events can lead people to realities, but credal realities cannot be considered the .effects of events

Yes, it can be said that the passage of time caused a strengthening of people’s belief in the family of ‘Ali (peace be upon him) and deepening of Shi‘a thought in their hearts. But if someone says that Shiaism and the occultation of the Imam (peace be upon him) were originated and completed by the passage of time, this is false, since many .proofs, which have been pointed out in the previous discussions, belie this view

No one can say that the traditions of the Imams (peace be upon them), all of which they have related from the tongue of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), are all forged, since all off them, in addition

Surah Ana'm (۶), Verse ۷۵ -۱

to consecutive narration, have external contexts with themselves. In reality, they are like the news of the martyrdom of ‘Ammar, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said,

تَقْتُلُکَ الْفِئَه الْبَاغِیَهُ."

"The oppressive party will kill you." (1)

No one said that after ‘Ammar was martyred by Mu`awiyah and his army, this tradition was forged, i.e. the tradition is an effect of that event. This is because before this event, the companions would relate this tradition. The issue of the Imamah of the Imams (peace be upon them) is the same way, regarding which it has been related from three of them, that is ‘Ali and Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said,

"The number of Imams is twelve, the last of whom shares my name." And it transpired exactly in this way in the external world. In this situation, none can claim that these traditions are spurious and were forged after the occurrence of these events.

"Mahdi" in a Special Meaning and Technical Usage

Question:

Is "Mahdi" a specific label and title referring to a particular person with particular qualities and distinctions or a general concept and title applied to everyone Allah has guided? In other words, is the Mahdi and belief in Mahdawiyyat related to person or a category?

Answer:

The concept of the word "Mahdi" is a general concept that is permissible to use, according to the language and common usage, for anyone that Allah has guided. With this concept, all of the prophets and legatees (awsiya’) are

Mahdi” (guided) and using this word for the person of the Prophet (peace be upon“ him and his family), Amir al-Mu’minin, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and the remaining Imams (peace be upon them) is permissible since all of them were “Mahdi” and guided. Rather, using this word to refer to other individuals were raised and attained .guidance in the school of those personages is permissible

For example, the companions of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) were all guided. Similarly, using the word for eminent Shi‘a, or rather all Shi‘a or all who have been guided to the truth and are on guidance is permissible. However, everyone knows that the purport of “Mahdi” which the Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) said was a particular label and title reserved for a specific and unusually mighty person about whose appearance the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) has given tidings and has invited his Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) and all the Muslims :to be among those awaiting his appearance. Some of these prophetic traditions are

اَلْمَهْدِی مِنْ وُلْدِی.

(The Mahdi is from my descendants.”(١“

اَلْمَهْدِی مِنْ عِتْرَتِی مِنْ وُلْدِ فَاطِمَهَ.

(The Mahdi is from my family, from the descendants of Fatimah.”(٢“

اَلْمَهْدِی مِنْ وُلْدِکَ.

(The Mahdi is from your descendants.”(٣“

Mahdi” in the meaning of “guided”, as per the various meanings of “guidance”, such“ as “showing the way,” “conveying to the desired object,” and other instances is also :used for non-humans, and the verse

رَبَّنَا الَّذِی أَعْطَی کُلَّ شَیْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدی

He“

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۳۶, Page ۳۰۹, hadith ۱۴۸

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۵۱, Page ۱۰۲

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۵۱, Page ۷۸

said, Our Lord is the One Gave every existent what is necessary for its creation, then (guided."(١)

.indicates this fact

In spite of all this, it appears that by studying the instances in which this word has been used, the conclusion is reached that "guidance" is generally used for individuals .in whom Allah's guidance has had an effect

:On this basis, it must be said

اَلْمَهْدِيُّ مَنْ هَدَاهُ اللهُ وَقَبِلَ هَدَايَتَهُ وَاهْتَدَى بِهَا بِعِنَايَةٍ مِنْهُ وَتَوْفِيقِهِ.

That is, one who has received Allah's guidance is "Mahdi." In other words, guidance in the meaning of "showing the path" has been directed at him and though the special attention and tawfiq of Allah, it has born fruit in him, for which the loftiest examples .(are the prophets and Imams (peace be upon them

According to reliable traditions, "Mahdi" is the title of the same promised personage of the end of time whose genealogy and qualities have even been pointed to in reliable traditions, which cannot be applied to anyone except the twelfth Imam, the son of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him). The title "Mahdi" in the meaning of the receiver of Allah's guidance, reviver of Islam, one who will fill the world with equity and justice, and possessor of distinguished qualities, was first used with regard to that personage and this took place in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) himself through his person, and the Mahdi in the sense of savior and redeemer—and other synonymous words like this from

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Surah Taha (٢٠), Verse ٥٠ -١

.Allah—are solely his titles

And mahdawiyyat as a concept of a category is not understood from any of the narrations related from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) or Imams .((peace be upon them

(Controversy Regarding the Date of Birth of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return

:Question

How can the controversy about the date of birth of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), which some say corresponds to the number of the letters of the word نور nur," light) – ۲۵۶ – while according to some traditions, it took place in the year ۲۵۵") ?A.H., be explained. In what year did the occultation of that personage take place

:Answer

.Dispute about such matters does not harm the basic topic or cause an enigma

Such disagreement exists with regard to the date of birth of most historical .personalities; in fact in many cases their dates of birth and death are unknown

The disagreement about the date of birth of Imam Sahib al-'Amr (may Allah hasten his return) is less than the disagreement existing about the date of birth of some of .the Imams and the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) himself

The reliable opinion is ۲۵۵ A.H., which Fadl ibn Sha¤han al-Nayshapuri—who is one of the major traditionists and a contemporary of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him) - has related, and his intermediary is a person like Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Hamza .(ibn Husayn ibn 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abbas ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him

:(As for the occultation of Imam Sahib al-'Amr (may Allah hasten his return

From the

very time of birth the public did not have permission to visit him in the usual manner, and his venerable father would only grant special companions and Shi'a the felicity of Allah's remaining word). The commencement) كلمه الله باقيه visiting his peerless son and of the minor occultation, which was also the beginning of that personage's Imamah, took place on the day of martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him), .that is in the year ۲۶۰ A.H

A point which must be mentioned here is that the coming up of the issue of the occultation of the Imam was not unexpected for the Shi'a and believers in Imamah when it occurred, since it had been referred to before that time in many traditions, and the people knew that Imam Sahib al-'Amr (may Allah hasten his return) will have to occultations—a short occultation called "sughra" and "qusra" and a long occultation ."called "kubra" and "tula

The detailed report of that has been mentioned completely in the books and usul (books of principles) of the Shi'a which were written before the birth of Imam Sahib .(al-Zaman (may Allah hasten his return

Consensus of the Shi'a Regarding the Imamah of Imam Sahib al-Amr (may Allah (hasten his return) after the Demise of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him

:Question

According to what Nawbakhti has written the books of Shi'a sects, the Shi'a after Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him) split up into fourteen sects. To what ?extent is this statement correct and until what time were these sects extant

:Answer

:As has passed, Nawbakhti writes

The Shi'a after the demise of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him) were divided into

fourteen sects. However, it appears that there has been some exaggeration in this view, since he and the remaining writers of books pertaining to sects have collected all the views that have been forwarded—even if held by only one person who himself did not remain firm in that opinion until the end. It may very well be that they have .mentioned "sects" about which using the word "sect" or "group" would not be correct

This is because the number of their believers, if they had more than one individual, is not known. It does not appear that they exceeded a few people. Or it is not known until what time and to what extent they were firm in their opinion; thus, they should not be counted as sects, or else the number of sects would reach the hundreds or .thousands

Shaykh Mufid and Shaykh Tusi, may Allah have mercy on them, have also forwarded .this same view

Shaykh Mufid in the second volume of Al-Fusul al-Mukhtara, narrating from al-Nawbakhti, mentions the names of these sects and says: None of these sects except .the Shi'a exist in our time – ۳۷۲ A.H

Thus, it becomes known that these sects have not existed to an extent that they be .worthy of being pointed out at all

Of course, if an opinion is attributed to them, even if it has no clear follower, it is necessary to research it, as Shaykh Mufid and Shaykh Tusi have performed, and they have proven the falsity of the views of all

.of these sects except the Twelver Shi'a

In summary, books of sects and schools of thought have been involved in .carelessness and exaggeration in counting groups and sects

Thus, such material in books cannot be relied upon – except in case of sects that exists even today or whose existence as a group is affirmed by reliable histories and .references

The Twelfth Imam's Revolution

:Question

Is the abundance the titles of the Imam of the Age because of the profusion of his personal, spiritual, and physical characteristics, or is it on account of the vastness of ?his reformative actions

:Answer

It is understood from the traditions that the blessed names of the twelfth Imam (may Allah hasten his return) are: Qa'im (The Riser), Mahdi (The Guided), Gha'ib (The Absent), and Hujjat (The Proof). In addition, various traditions mention him with titles such as Hujjatullah (The Proof of Allah), Khalifatullah (Caliph of Allah), and al-Qa'im (The Riser). The reason for the abundance of his titles is the same two factors mentioned above. Of course, out of these titles, some are more well known than .others

It is possible that conditions in a particular time cause people to pay greater attention to one of these titles or qualities or that a particular aspect of the issue be discussed more, and consequently speakers, writers, and poets give more attention to that title or aspect. This is similar to the "most beautiful names" (al-asma' al-husna) of Allah, in which individual circumstances or prevailing conditions cause people to give more attention to one of

those names and call Him by it, such as “Al-Shafi” (The Healer), “Al-Salam” (The Security), “Al-Hafiz” (The Protector), or “Al-Raziq” (The Sustainer). And this is not to mean that the remaining “most beautiful names” do not have a reason for being .attributed to Allah

Thus, each of the names and titles of the Imam of the Time (may Allah hasten his return) refer to one of his qualities or actions, and most of them have been mentioned in traditions that broach the actual issue of the twelfth Imam and his reappearance. That is, that personage was well known by these names and titles years before he .himself or his father were even born

Regarding the fact that the twelfth Imam is the same as the Mahdi and the Mahdi is no different from the twelfth Imam, eminent Sunni scholars agree with the Shi‘a. For this very reason individuals like Abu Dawud - author of the book Sunan (prophetic character) - have narrated traditions of the twelve Imams, and among his titles, his being promised by the prophets and his personal excellencies and genealogy are .referred to

(The title “Al–Qa’im” (The Riser

:Question

As everyone knows, one of the titles of the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) is “Al-Qa’im” (The Riser). A tradition has been related regarding the reason for his being given this title that requires contemplation, since it apparently indicates that this title was given because that personage will reappear after death. Yet we have over ,approximately one thousand traditions regarding that personage, his occultation

and long life, in view of which that tradition cannot be relied upon. However, if some .clarifications about its narrators, text, and meaning can be given, it would be useful

:Answer

The great scholar Shaykh al-Tusi narrates an unreliable tradition that apparently indicates that the “Qa’im” was given this title because he will arise after death. Shaykh al-Tusi has provided a bit of explanation about this tradition, but before we enter this topic, we consider it necessary to mention the basics of Imamah in Shiaism, which verses of the Noble Qur’an, traditions, and rational proofs affirm. These principles are :as follows

۱. Imamah is a Divine covenant, and individuals—who are worthy of bearing it—are specified and appointed by Allah, and this Divine selection and appointment is .(announced to the people by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family

۲. The most important conditions of the Imam are sinlessness and being more knowledgeable than all other people, such that all be in need of his knowledge, guidance, and direction, which he be free of need of all, as has been related about Khalil ibn Ahmad that he said about the Imamah of Amir al-Mu’minin (peace be upon :(him

إِحْتِيَاجُ الْكُلِّ إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتِغْنَاؤُهُ عَنِ الْكُلِّ دَلِيلٍ عَلَى أَنَّهُ إِمَامٌ الْكُلِّ.

The dependence of all others on him and his independence from all others are proof“ (that he is the Imam of all.”(۱

۳. The earth will never be without a Divine Proof and Imam, and whoever dies without having recognized the Imam of his time dies

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۱- Mu’jam Rijal al-hadith, Volume ۷, Page ۷۶ and Tanfih al-Maqal, Volume ۱, Page ۴۰۳

.the death of ignorance

۴. The Imams, as per the text of mutawatir traditions from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), are twelve personages.

۵. They are twelve and all are from the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), and according to the meaning of the mutawatir traditions of Thaqalayn (The Two Weighty Things), they are equals of the Qur'an and shall never part from the Qur'an.

۶. The Imams possess all of the religious and administrative stations except prophethood, which was sealed with the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). And as Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) has said in Nahj al-Balagha, they are قوام الله, or the Divine Guardians(۱) over the creation, and on the basis of another tradition, they are the ship of salvation.

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ عَرَفَهُمْ وَعَرَفُوهُ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَنْكَرَهُمْ وَهُمْ سَفَنٌ النَّجَاهِ وَأَمَانٌ الْأُمَّهِ مِنَ الضَّلَالِ وَالإِخْتِلافِ.

"None shall enter Paradise except one who recognizes them and whom they recognize, and none shall enter Hell except one who denies them; they are the ships of salvation and refuge of the ummat from deviation and discord."(۲)

۷. The name, qualities, and order of the Imamah of the Imams (peace be upon them) was specified by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), and in addition, each Imam specified the following Imam.

These are among the important foundations of belief in the principle of Imamah, and for every Muslim

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۱- Nahj al-Balagha, Subhi al-Salih, Speech ۱۵۲, Part ۷

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۶, Page ۲۳۳

who believes in the unseen world and in Allah, messengership, and the messengership of the Seal of the Prophets (peace be upon him and his family), the criterion of truth of these fundamentals is a rational proof, Qur'anic verse, or definite and mutawatir tradition. And most of these fundamentals can be proven by all three .means

The fact that Imamah is a Divine covenant and Allah specifies it has been argued by rational and Qur'anic proofs and the consecutively-narrated sunnat. 'Allamah Hilli has established one thousand proofs of this issue in Alfain, and in fact this issue has its roots in the unity of Allah, and like the principle of Divine Unity, it comprises unity of :rulership and authority over creation

لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَلَهُ الأَمْرُ وَهُوَ السُّلْطَانُ وَهُوَ الحَاكِمُ وَهُوَ الوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ العَالِمُ بِمَصَالِحِ عِبَادِهِ لاَ أَمْرٌ وَ لاَ نَهِيٌّ لِأَحَدٍ دُوْنِهِ.

His is the command and rule, He is the King and the Ruler and the One in authority," He is the one who is cognizant of the interests of His servants. Commanding and ".Forbidding is for none save Him

In the issue of the necessity of sinlessness and being the most knowledgeable as well, :abundant rational, Qur'anic, and narrational proofs exist, among which is this verse

أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِى إِلى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يَتْبَعَ أَمَّنْ لاَ يَهْدِى إِلاَّ أَنْ يُهْدى

Then is one who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or one who does not" (find guidance except by being guided?"(١)

The late 'Allamah has also established one thousand proofs about the issue

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Surah Yunus (١٠), Verse ٣٥ -١

.of the necessity of sinlessness

Regarding the principle that the earth shall not remain without a Proof and Imam, in :addition to verses such as

وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

(And every people has a guide."(۱"

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ

(And certainly we conveyed them the verses of Qur'an continuously."(۲"

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

(The day when We will call every people with their leader."(۳"

Mutawatir traditions are also found, among which is the well-known tradition of Kumail ibn Ziyad from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) which has been mentioned in Nahj al-Balagha and all other books of Zaydi and Twelver Shi'a and even in the reliable books of the Sunnis, such as Tadhkirat ul-Huffaz. From this it is known that all are agreed that the earth will never be empty of a Proof; of course, it makes .no difference whether the Proof is apparent or hidden

And in Sawa`iq and other books of the Sunnis, a discourse has been related from Imam Zain al-`Abidin (peace be upon him) in which it has been explicitly mentioned .(that the world is not without an Imam from the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them

These principles have even been explicated in the supplications of the Imams from Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them). In this regard, we will suffice with only a portion of the supplication of the day of `Arafah from Imam Zain al-'Abidin (peace be upon him). :That personage says

اللّـهُـمَّ إِنَّكَ أَيَّدْتَ دِينَكَ فِى كُلِّ أَوَانٍ بِإِمَامٍ أَقَمْتَهُ عَلَمًا لِعِبَادِكَ وَ مَنَارًا فِى بِلَادِكَ بَعْدَ أَنْ وَصَلْتَ

Surah Ra'd (۱۳), Verse ۷ -۱

Surah Qasas (۲۸), Verse ۵۱ -۲

Surah Isra' (۱۷), Verse ۷۱ -۳

حَبْلَهُ بِحَبْلِکَ وَ جَعَلْتَهُ الذَّرِيعَهَ إِلَى رِضْوَانِکَ وَ افْتَرَضْتَ طَاعَتَهُ وَ حَذَّرْتَ مَعْصِيَتَهُ وَ أَمَرْتَ بِامْتِثَالِ أَوَامِرِهِ وَ الِانْتِهَآءِ عِنْدَ نَهْيِهِ وَ أَن لاَ يَتَقَدَّمَهُ مُتَقَدِّمٌ وَ لاَ يَتَأَخَّرَ عَنْهُ مُتَأَخِّرٌ فَهُوَ عِصْمَهُ اللائِذِينَ وَ كَهْفُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ عُرْوَهُ الْمُتَمَسِّكِينَ وَ بَهَآءُ الْعَالَمِينَ

Allah! You have supported your religion in every age with an Imam whom You" established as a standard for Your servants and a beacon in Your lands, after You linked his covenant with Yours and made him the means of Your pleasure, made obligatory his obedience and cautioned against his disobedience, commanded to execute his commands and shun what he forbids and that none should precede him nor stay back from him. Thus he is the guard of those seeking refuge and the recourse of the believers, handle of those who grasp (guidance) and the glory of the (inhabitants of the universe."(١)

Anyone who looks carefully at this portion of the supplication will both come to recognize the Shi'a viewpoint regarding the principle of Imamah and will also understand that this station and these affairs were established for the Imam from the .beginning and no one has added anything to them

As for the issue that "Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance," this is also a principle which reliable traditions have conveyed explicitly. The reliable traditions of Thaqalain (the two weighty things), Safina (the ship .of salvation), and Aman (safety) all indicate this point

And it has been explicitly mentioned in mutawatir traditions that

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Sahifah Sajjadiyah, Supplication ۴٧ -١

the Imams are twelve personages, all of whom are from the Ahl al-Bait of the Prophet, and eleven of them are from the progeny of ‘Ali and Fatimah (peace be upon them), the first of them being Amir al-Mu’minin (peace be upon him), and after him Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him), followed by the Prince of Martyrs Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), and after him nine people from his progeny, of whom the ninth—who is the twelfth Imam—is Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his .(return

Thus, since these principles have been established with firm proofs, eminent scholars such as Shaykh al-Tusi, Shaykh al-Mufid, Ibn Babawayh, ‘Allamah Majlisi (Allah’s mercy upon them all) have refuted by relying on these principles the statement of anyone who, previous to their time or subsequent to it, has said something to the contrary or given attention to a rare and unaccepted tradition. This is because the buttress of the proofs of these principles is reliable to an extent that it can even be .claimed that after the principle of Divine unity and prophecy, no principle is so reliable

In view of all this, no Shi‘a scholar has held that the rising of the Qa’im (may Allah hasten his return) will occur after his death. And if anyone has brought up baseless possibilities, taking into account the points mentioned and since they are completely against objective realities, they must not be given any attention, since they have no .scientific value

After this preface and explanation of

this point, the life and long occultation of the Imam has been established on the basis of these principles. There remains no room for this tradition that says the Qa'im (may Allah hasten his return) will rise after death, since this notion would result in the severing of the thread of Imamah, the earth's remaining without the existence of a sinless Imam, and the refutation of many traditions which indicate the life and long .occultation of that personage

Aside from all of these objections, the above-mentioned tradition's chain of narrators is not reliable, and none of the `Ulama' or Fuqaha' (jurists) has relied on such traditions in even a single secondary issue. This is because one of the narrators is Musa ibn Sa`dan al-Hannat, whom scholars of rijal (the science of the study of narrators) have described as weak and whose narration they consider unreliable. He has narrated this tradition from 'Abdullah ibn Qasim, whom they have titled "The Ever-Lying Hero." He in turn narrates from Abu Sa`id al-Khurasani, and if we don't consider his existence unknown according to reference books of rijal, then his position .—in terms of being truthful or dishonest—is unclear

Now, contemplate; how can this tradition—whose narrator is the champion of fabrication—be relied upon in opposition to those firm fundamentals and hundreds of ?reliable traditions

As for the reason for employing the title "Al-Qa'im" for the Imam of the Age (may Allah :(hasten his return

Al-Qa'im" means "the one who rises." The Imam shall rise against political conditions" and religious and

social deviations and fill the world with justice and equity after it had become filled with injustice and oppression. Additionally, the issue of rising with the sword and .armed struggle is also understood from that title

Nevertheless, since "rising" has weak and strong degrees, it can be understood from Qa'im bi 'l-amr" (upholders of the affair),"قائم بالأمر traditions that all of the Imams were and it is proper and befitting to employ this title for all of them, in accordance with the positions they had. But since the rising of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) is a world uprising that subsumes all social, individual, political, and economical conditions of humanity and brings to fruition Allah's promises to His prophets and the prophets' prophecies to their people, this title is used without qualification for that personage. Thus, anytime they say "al-Qa'im" and their is not context that another one of the Imams is intended, Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) is .understood from that

In a tradition that Shaykh Saduq narrates in the book Kamal al-Din from Imam :Muhammad at-Taqi (peace be upon him), the ninth Imam, it has come

إِنَّ الإِمَامَ بَعْدِی ابْنِی عَلِّی)...(

The Imam after me is my son 'Ali - Imam 'Ali al-Naqi (peace be upon him) - whose" command is my command, whose speech is my speech, and obedience to whom is obedience to me. And the Imamah after him has been placed in his son Hasan - Imam .(Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him

His command is his father's command, his word is his father's word, and obedience to .him is obedience to his father

.The narrator says, After that the Imam fell silent

I asked, O' son of the Messenger of Allah, then who is the Imam after Hasan (peace ?(be upon him

The Imam at first wept to a great extent and then said, After Hasan, his son is the Establisher of Truth, the Awaited (القائم بالحق المنتظر).

I said, O' son of the Messenger, why has that personage been named "Qa'im" (The ?(Riser

The Imam replied, because after his name and remembrance is forgotten and most .of the believers in his Imamah turn back from their creed, he shall rise

?(I said, Why has he been named "Muntazar" (The Awaited

He replied, because he has an occultation with a very long duration, such true believers will wait for his advent and appearance, but people of doubt and uncertainty will deny and rejecters will ridicule him. Those who specify a time for it will become many and those who are hasty during that occultation will be destroyed, but the (Muslims—those who submit—will achieve salvation."(١

Allamah Majlisi has said, the meaning of "death" that has come in that weak tradition' .is that that personage will arise after his name and memory has been forgotten

And Shaykh Mufid relates a tradition from Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) in al-Irshad in which he says, "سمی القائم لقیامه بالحق" "He was named the 'Qa'im' because he (shall arise with truth."(٢

And from some narrations another

۱- Kamal ad-Din, Volume ۲, Page ۳۷۸, Section ۳۶, hadith ۳. See also, Ma'ani al-Akhbar

۲- Irshad of Shaykh Mufid, Page ۳۶۴

reason that is understood is that the Imam was given this title by Allah because, in the .worlds before this world, he used to stand and pray

Regarding the entitling of that personage with the title "Al-Mahdi" as well, appropriate reasons have been mentioned. Of course, it is not the case that "Al-Qa'im" is the original title and "Al-Mahdi" is a secondary title. Both are titles and the usage of each name has a separate reason. Rather, it can be said that since the concept of the "Mahdi" is "the one whom Allah has guided" (من هداه الله), according to rank, a person must be "Qa'im" whom Allah has guided.

That is, the "Qa'im" must be "one whom Allah has guided," but it is not necessary that "one whom Allah has guided" must always be "Qa'im." However, the actions, reforms, movement, uprising, and stand that will take place by the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), such as establishment of a world government, are dependent on rising and the becoming actualized of the title "Qa'im."

These titles are not classified into primary and secondary, and all have been heard from the blessed tongues of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and pure Imams (peace be upon them); nor do they have "old" and "new." Each has its own particular concept and each has been used with attention to a particular aspect. In texts, sometimes all of these titles are mentioned, sometimes one, and another time one title is mentioned before

.another

In any case, application of these titles is on the basis of essential and actualized titles, .all of which that personage possesses

Two Types of Occultation

:Question

According to the content of existing traditions, the occultation of the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his return) has occurred in two forms. During the first occultation, communication with him was possible through his representatives and agents, but with the ending of this period and the beginning of the second occultation, which is the complete occultation, the period of the responsibility of the agents and particular .representatives also ended

and (صغری) "The question is whether referring to these two occultation as the "minor was prevalent from the beginning or whether it became prevalent in (کبری) ""major .later times, like the Safawi period

:Answer

Discussion regarding issues like this should not be a verbal discussion. Whether a or the (کبری) person calls the first occultation, which was shorter, the minor occultation or the second occultation, which has a long duration, the ,(قصری) shorter occultation or refers to them by any other (طولی) or the longer occultation (کبری) major occultation word, the fact and reality of the matter is not changed. In any case, these two .occultations have occurred

The issue is that principle of the occultation having two forms was explicitly stated in the usul (early hadith collections) and other books of hadith even before its occurrence. Nu'mani and others who lived before the termination of the minor occultation have narrated it, and this fact is proof that the two

.forms of occultation were put forth

During the period of the minor occultation, though the position of the Shi‘a was sensitive, no one can claim that all these traditions related from the Imams (peace be upon them) in books like the Ghaybat of al-Fadl ibn Sha’han and Nu‘mani and Kamal al-Din of Saduq are all falsified and were written after the occurrence of the .occultation

We see that the Shi‘a of the various cities and regions would refer to the nawwab (representatives); they did not do such for no reason. Signs and evidences were definitely present that indicated that they were in contact with the Imam. Otherwise, it is impossible that individuals like ‘Ali ibn Babawayh, with that intellectual position and eminence of thought, would pursue contact with the Imam (peace be upon him) through the nawwab without their link being as clear for him as daylight. This event .itself indicates that they had clear evidence of the truth of the representatives

The other issue is that though Abu Ja‘far al-‘Amrawi - ‘Uthman ibn Sa‘id—and the remaining representatives were a means of Shi‘a unity and their agency was completely accepted in all Shi‘a circles and regions, especially a city like Qum, this unity was because of belief in the Imamah of the twelfth Imam. This issue brought about the spiritual influence of the representatives, not that they became a cause of .Shi‘a unity without taking in view the issue of Imamah

Th e unity and consensus of the Shi‘a about believing in the Imamah

of the twelfth Imam was the cause of their unity in following the Imam's (peace be upon them) representatives.

Just as today belief in the Imamah of that personage is a cause of the spiritual influence in believers' hearts of the 'Ulama' and Fuqaha' (scholars and jurists) as general representatives of that personage.

During the minor occultation, specification of the representatives took place directly by the person of the Imam (peace be upon him), and the fact that we see eminent scholars lowering their heads in submission before the representatives is proof that this selection was by the person of the Imam (peace be upon him) on the basis of the representatives' worthiness. And the submission of all classes and political and scholarly personalities is proof that original leadership during the period of the minor occultation was with the person of the Imam (peace be upon him).

It was as a result of the existence of persuasive evidence and proofs that scholarly men of the Shi'a and personalities like Abu Sahl al-Nawbakhti and Ibn Matil, and Hasan ibn Janahasibi and other eminent Shi'a believed in the righteousness of the representatives.

Similarly, after the demise of the fourth representative—'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri - also the issue that the period of occultation and the particular representation has ended was accepted by all. And if any claimed to be a representative, they repudiated him on the basis of this very principle, and in passing it can be said that one of the important wisdoms of the shorter

occultation was to make the Shi‘a familiar with the issue of occultation and preparing the ground for the period of the long occultation, so the Shi‘a can continue his life during a long period without the apparent presence of the Imam and successfully .complete this major Divine test

(The Miraculous Birth of the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his return

:Question

Miracles and supernatural events are related with regard to the birth of the twelfth Imam. To what extent are these miracles reliable and how can they be proven? And ?why have some historians not related them

:Answer

۱. Historians have written and recorded the actual birth of Imam Mahdi the Twelfth .Imam, son of Imam al-‘Askari (peace be upon him), like all other historical events

۲. Regarding some of the miracles that occurred during that personage’s birth or that of all other prophets and trustees (awsiya’), if prevalent historical sources do not provide anything, this is considered a defect of the sources mentioned, since the same historians in many instances have pointed to some historical aspects which were not so important. This lack of attention by a writer of history to some aspects of an issue sometimes originates from creedal prejudice. But this action, whatever it’s proof may be, does not harm the relations of other people’s statements that took .place based on reliable sources

The history of the prophets is akandeh of miracles, and the birth and growth of most prophets was not normal. For example, the creation of Adam, birth of Ibrahim (peace be upon him), birth of Ishaq and Musa and Yahya

.and ‘Isa and his speaking from the cradle are all among abnormal events

All of these are a chain of historical events, though such-and-such historian may not have related them. The details of the birth of the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his return), which is among the uncontestable historical events, are similar. Its not being narrated by historians who were either biased or intended to be brief or .intended other things does not harm the issue itself

That which the Shi‘a attribute to the Imams is similar to the issues that have been said about Ibrahim, Ishaq, Isma‘il, Musa, ‘Isa, Yahya, and so on, all of which, of course, .also have a reliable chain of narration

The events related to the birth of the Twelfth Imam are more reliable, from the point .of view of chain of narration and source, than most historical events that one sees

Philosophy of the Delay of Reappearance with the Presence of Conditions

:Question

Throughout history, we sometimes come across conditions and opportunities in which it is assumed the requisites for reappearance are present, for example, the people’s receptiveness to religion, self-sacrifice in the path of Islam, giving their lives, and martyrdom for it was to such an extent or with such fervor and commotion that it appears that rather than ۳۱۳ people, thousands of people are ready to sacrifice their lives under the command of the Imam (peace be upon him). With the existence of ?these conditions, what is the secret of the delay of the reappearance

:Answer

Regarding the presence of the conditions for the reappearance

:(of the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his return

First, no one can claim to know with certainty, that is, say that all the conditions are fulfilled, since this claim itself requires knowledge of all the conditions, since it is .possible that the traditions have not comprised an exposition of all of the conditions

Second, assuming that the conditions are limited to those instances that have come in the traditions, as Shaykh al-Saduq has said, in reality one can still not be sure that .those particular ٣١٣ companions and the remaining conditions are present

This is because if all of the conditions and circumstances apparently indicate the presence of the requisites of reappearance, without denying, for example, the existence of pure individuals who can be counted among the ٣١٣ companions of the Imam (peace be upon him), we also cannot claim that all of the individuals are like .'Salman, Abu Dhar, Miqdad, Rashid Hijri, and the people of Karbala

In the present situation, with all the claims that are put forward in our society for returning to and aspiring at Islam, which are certainly a matter of pride, we still see that many bring the Divine laws under question in a large number of political, economical, and social issues. This is to such an extent that they regard some religious commandments that are not exclusive to a particular time or place as being restricted to the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) time and on this pretext free themselves from

responsibility. With the existence of such individuals and events, how can we say that the conditions for reappearance are ready, let alone asking about the reason for it ?delay

On this basis, in this issue it is appropriate for us to submit to the command and will of Allah, the All-Knowing, and not forgo the merit of waiting for the reappearance. And as was indicated in the tradition of ‘Ali ibn Mahziyar, we should attribute the concealment of the Imam (peace be upon him) to our own actions and always keep the memory of that personage alive in our hears and try to bring about the requisites .of his appearance ever more by reforming our own actions

The Length of the Occultation and Difficult and Formidable Trials

:Question

According to what is well known, during the occultation of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), which will be very lengthy, difficult trials will occur such that a person will be a believer in the morning but a disbeliever in the evening. Are these types of trials in the time near the reappearance or will such trials occur throughout ?the period of occultation

:Answer

According to Islamic principles, the world is a place of tests and trials and people are in a state of being tried during everything that happens to them. During youth and old age, whether wealthy or in need, in health and illness, when in power, when in leadership, they are always in a state of trial; it makes no difference whether the Imam (peace be upon him) is present or

.in occultation

:The Qur’an says in this regard

أَحسِبَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لاَ يُفْتَنُونَ

Have the people presumed they would be released upon saying, ‘We believe,’“ (without being tested?”(۱)

As we know, during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) himself, while all of the programs and incidents were a test, sometimes, severe trials would occur, in which none but a few were able to fulfill their obligation. For example, in battle, aside from individuals like ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) and Abu Dujana and a few others, none were able to stand firm in jihad and defense of Islam and the Prophet. This is because during severe trials, only a limited number of people have the ability to stand firm; many an individual would flee out f fear. It has been related that in on the battles ‘Uthman fled from the battlefield and returned after three days. Or after the Prophet’s (peace be upon him and his family) demise, such a severe trial came to pass that not more than three or seven people were able to successfully perform their duty and remain firm on the line that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had specified. Afterwards as well, such trials continued and :shall continue, so that, in the words of the Qur’an

لِيَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ

(so that Allah separates the impure from the pure.”(۲)...“

These trials have wisdom and many benefits, among which is that the disposition of

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Surah ‘Ankabut (۲۹), Verse ۲ -۱

Surah Anfal (۸), Verse ۳۷ -۲

the people of the world and society become ready for that dignified reappearance in which the resolute and steadfast believers will be separated from the remaining people. Preserving one's faith during the period of the Imam's (peace be upon him) occultation is possible by enduring very severe difficulties. Without doubt, millions of people leave this school of trials with pride and heads held high, that is through patience and forbearance and perseverance in difficulties, they succeed in preserving .their religion, faith, and honor

According to the content of some traditions, during this period protecting one's religion will become more difficult than holding fire in the palm of one's hand, and oppression, injustice, corruption, and perversion will become prevalent. Values will be regarded as being against values, and things opposed to values will be regarded as values. Sins will be considered a matter of pride and accomplishment. One's friends will encourage and induce him to sin and reproach him for not cooperating with .oppressors, sinners, and corrupt people

Women will enter into work exclusive to men. Many wars and natural afflictions will come about. In a tradition of Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari regarding the commentary :of the verse

أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِى الأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

O you who believe!) Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority)" (amongst you (the legatees of the Messenger)."(١)

It has come that the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) gives news about his khulafa' and successors from Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) until Imam

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Surah an-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۵۹ -١

Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), names them one after one and gives tidings to the people about the conquering of the East and West of the world at the blessed hands of Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return), and says, inter alia:

"ذَالَکَ الَّذِی یُغِیبُ عَنْ شِیعَتِهِ وَأَوْلِیَائِهِ غَیْبَهً لاَ یُثْبِتُ فِیهَا عَلَی الْقَوْلِ بِإِمَامَتِهِ إلاَّ مَنِ امْتَحَنَ اللهُ قَلْبَهُ لِلإِیمَانِ."

"He is the one who will be concealed from his Shi'a and friends such a concealment that none shall remain firm in belief in his Imamah except one whose heart Allah has tested for faith."(1)

And Amir al-Mu'minin has also informed about these difficulties and tribulations in Nahj al-Balagha. In one instance, he says;

مَا أَطْوَلَ هَذَا العِنَاءِ وَأَبْعَدَ هَذَا الرَّجَاءِ.

"How lengthy is this adversity, and how distant is this hope!"(2)

It has even been related, in another tradition, that:

إِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ هَذَا الأَمْرِ غَیْبَهً اَلْمُتَمَسِّکُ فِیهَا بِدِینِهِ کَالْخَارَطِ لِلْقِتَادِ.

"Verily the Master of this Affair has a such a concealment that one who grips firmly to his religion during it is like one who picks thorns with his hands."(3)

Therefore, as can be understood from the traditions, the entire period of concealment is a period of trial and examination; of course, the types of those trials are different in the different times and places. The believer during this period must show perseverance in abiding by the commandments of religion and struggling to elevate the word of Islam and honor of the Muslims and to repel the influence and cultural and political domination of foreigners.

1- A'lam al-Wara, Page ۳۹۷

2- Nahj al-Balagha, Subhi as-Salih, Speech ۱۸۷, Part ۴

3- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۵۲, Page ۱۱۱, hadith ۲۱.

He must be in combat and jihad with all negative and unhelpful circumstances and conditions and be hopeful of the victory of Islam and the Muslims and the succor of Allah. He must not lose hold of himself in face of the power and strength of the disbelievers or become inclined towards their improper behavior. And at the same time he must have certainty that the promises of Allah and the Prophet of Allah are true and that eventually Islam will be victorious and conquer the world, as a result of .which justice and equity shall fill the world

The Principle of Grace and the Imamah of the Concealed Imam

:Question

Has the "principle of grace" been derived from the traditions and narrations of the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them) or has it entered Shi'a kalam (theology) through the contact of the Shi'a with the Mu'tazila? And what is the method of applying this ?principle with the existence of the concealed Imam

:Answer

Since the Shi'a have many proofs regarding the principle of Imamah aside from the principle of grace, with the existence of those proofs, if the principle of grace is relied .upon, it is for the purpose of supporting the proofs

As for the contact of the Shi'a with the Mu'tazila, who are sometimes referred to as the adliyya (Equitists) as opposed to the Asha'ira, it should be known that though the Mu'tazila, a sect that splintered off from the Asha'ira and came into being after the Shi'a, were in agreement with the Shi'a over some beliefs and theological issues, this

is not proof of their affecting the Shi'a school. Rather, it is instead proof of their being affected by Shi'a beliefs, since the Asha'ira are a sect that came into being later on. Moreover, as was mentioned, all of the Shi'a beliefs are taken from reason, the Glorious Qur'an, and traditions of the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them). The principle of grace is also from the Shi'a themselves and is derived from those very sources and origin.

It is in a tradition that Jabir asked the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) about the benefit of the existence of a concealed Imam and the way of deriving benefit from his existence during the concealment. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said in reply,

أَیْ وَالَّذِی بَعَثَنِی بِالنُّبُوَهِ! إِنَّهُمْ یَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهِ وَیَسْتَضْیئُونَ بِنُورِ وِلاَیَتِهِ فِی غَیْبَتِهِ کَانْتِفَاعِ النَّاسِ بِالشَّمْسِ وَإِنْ جَلَّلَهَا السَّحَابِ.

"Yes, by the One who sent me with the prophecy! Verily they benefit from him and seek light from the illumination of his wilayah (authority) during his concealment just as people benefit from the sun though it has been covered by clouds."(1)

To negate in entirety that the existence of a concealed Imam is lutf (grace) is not proper for a rational person who is unaware of unseen affairs. After the Imamah itself and his concealment are established, certainty of the existence of grace and presence of a benefit in his existence is necessary, since if the appointment of an Imam who has been commanded

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1- al-Zam al-Nasib, Volume ۱, Page ۴۲۹

to go into concealment does not entail grace, it is futile and vain; and Allah is far above vain and futile actions. Therefore, the appointment of a concealed Imam by Allah .(certainly entails lutf (grace

Granted, if we wish to establish both the necessity of appointment of an Imam and the Imamah of a concealed person through the principle of grace, the objection arises that it must first be known that the concealed Imam entails grace. Otherwise, without knowledge of its being grace, his Imamah will not be established. However, we establish the necessity of appointment of an Imam through the principle of grace and the Imamah of the concealed Imam through other firm proofs, and by joining these two proofs to the fact that Allah does not do anything in vain, it is established that the Imamah of the concealed Imam entails grace. The statement of al-Muhaqqiq al-Tusi, ;who says

وُجُودِهِ لُطْفٌ وَتَصْرِفُهُ لُطْفٌ آخِرَ وَعَدَمُهُ مِنَّا.

is based on the principle that the existence of the Imam is grace absolutely, whether manifest or hidden. And this is a principle that has been established in accordance :with the speech of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), who says

لَئَلَّا تُبْطِلُ حُجَجِ اللهِ وَبَيِّنَاتِهِ.

The Divine proofs and signs are protected by the existence of the Imam, whether he .be present or concealed

It is worthy of mention that if the objection of the absence of grace with regard to the concealed Imam be valid, it is also applicable to an Imam who is not

concealed, yet who is not able to act freely in affairs. His Imamah will be without grace for the same reason that the Imamah of the concealed Imam is regarded as being without grace. However, this objection has not been made with regard to the manifest Imam who is not able to freely act in the affairs and tasks pertaining to Imamah. Similarly, it has not been made regarding a prophet who, due to circumstances, is unable to guide others or whose guidance is not effective, or a prophet whose mission was general, but opponents and adversaries prevented his message from reaching the entire public, and it has not been denied that his prophecy .entails grace

It is possible to establish a rational proof of the Imamah of the concealed Imam (peace be upon him) with the exposition that appointment and specification of the Imam by Allah is grace, and grace is obligatory upon Allah. Therefore, Allah has appointed someone to Imamah after Imam Hasan al-'Askari (peace be upon him), and that person will not be other than his son, since the incapacity and invalidity of the other claimants to Imamah has been established and at present, no one has such a claim. Thus, either Allah has withheld grace to His servants during the period of concealment, which is opposed to Divine wisdom, or He has appointed an Imam out of .grace, in which case the Imam is none other than the twelfth Imam

The Issue of Bada' (Alteration in the Divine Will) and the Tradition of Abu Hamza

:Question

A tradition has been narrated by

Abu Hamza Thumali from Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) according to which Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) said that relief will come after the ۷۰th year after Hijra, but because of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) the affair was delayed until the year ۱۴۰ after Hijra. Then, because the Shi'a did not protect the secret, Allah once again delayed the affair such that He did not place any time for it in .the knowledge of the Imams

Please explain the commentary of this tradition along with the many other traditions that indicate that the promised relief shall occur after long periods and following great events and happenings. And doesn't the occurrence of bada', which is understood from this tradition, cause the presumption that something became known for Allah—we seek refuge with Allah—after it had been unknown? In any case, what is the ?correct explanation

:Answer

First: This tradition has objections in its chain of narrators, since according to books of rijal, Abu Hamza al-Thumali did not belong to the fourth generation of narrators; his demise occurred in the year ۱۵۰ A.H. Hasan ibn Mahbub, who according to the chain of narrators narrated this tradition from Abu Hamza, is from the sixth generation, and passed away at the age of ۷۵ years in the year ۲۲۴ A.H. Thus, Hasan ibn Mahbub was not more than one year old when Abu Hamza passed away. In such a case it is absolutely not possible for him to narrate from Abu

Hamza, and without doubt another individual was an intermediary between him and Abu Hamza. However, since it is not known who that person is, we cannot regard this tradition as reliable; moreover, a tradition narrated by only one person cannot be an authority in doctrinal principles, let alone when its chain of narrators is also unknown.

Second: With the existence of many reliable traditions that all explicitly indicate that the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) and the just government of the righteous shall not come to pass that quickly and that one must await magnificent changes and grave events over very long periods before his reappearance, how can a forged tradition with only one chain of narrators be relied upon in the face of all those traditions? Moreover, many sermons and traditions have been related from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) in which both the length of the period during which one must await the reappearance and the great events and severe trials of the believers have been referred to. With the existence of this, how is it possible to say that a singly-narrated, forged traditions that says that the Imam specified the time of reappearance as the year ٧٠ A.H. is reliable.

In addition, alteration in Divine decrees is a conceivable matter, though this does not mean that Allah the Exalted is unaware of affairs in the beginning and then acquires knowledge of them. Such a belief is invalid according to the Shi'a, since all Shi'a

believe Allah to be free and far removed from ignorance coming to know about something after its being concealed. Bada’, in the conception which the Shi‘a believe in, is a Qur’anic and Islamic principle, and an important part of the issues of theology .and similarly the issues of prophecy are based on it

;Among the verses related to bada’ are

وَلَوْ أَنَّ اَهْلَ القُرى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقوا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالأَرْضِ وَلَكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

Were the inhabitants of the cities to believe and adopt piety, We would open them“ blessings from the sky and the earth; yet they denied (the truth), so We requited them (what they had earned.”(١

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِى الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيدِى النَّاسِ

Corruption has manifested in the land and in the sea on account of what the hands of“ (the people have earned.”(٢

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ اُدْعُونِى أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

(Your Lord has said, Call on Me that I may answer you.”(٣“

اَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّاراً يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُم مِدْرَاراً

Seek forgiveness from your Lord, since He is Ever-Forgiving; He constantly sends“ (rain upon you from the sky.”(۴

وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوْسَى ثَلَثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرٍ

(We covenanted Musa thirty nights, then completed them with ten (nights more).”(۵“

فَلَوْلاَ كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٍ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعِهَا إِيْمَانُهَا إِلاَّ قَوْمُ يُوْنُسٍ لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْىِ فِى الْحَيَاهِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَعْنَاهُمْ إِلى حِيَن

So why did not one of the cities believe that its belief might benefit it except the“ people of Yunus; when they believed we remove from them the debasing punishment in this world

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۱- Surah A'araf (۷), Verse ۹۶

۲- Surah Rum (۳۰), Verse ۴۱

۳- Surah Ghafir (۴۰), Verse ۶۰

۴- Surah Nuh (۷۱), Verse ۱۰, ۱۱

۵- Surah A'raf (۷), Verse ۱۴۲

(and cause them to enjoy until a specified time."(1)

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

(Verily, if you be grateful, I shall increase you (in blessings)."(2)"

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجاً وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ يَحْتَسِبُ

Whoever adopts piety with regard to Allah, He creates for him an escape (from" (difficulty) and grants him sustenance whence he does not expect."(3)

ذَالِکَ بِأَنَّ اللهَ لَمْ يَکُ مُغَيِّراً نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِم

That is because Allah does not change any blessing He had granted unto a people" (until they change what is in themselves."(4)

The bada' that the Shi'a believe in, along with belief in the absolute knowledge and power of Allah, is a concept that is understood from such verses. For example, in them it is said that gratitude causes blessings from Allah to increase; Allah delivers a pious person from hardships by virtue of piety (taqwa) and sustains him from an unexpected source; He fulfills needs through prayer; on account of repentance and faith, He distances people from punishment; and because of misuse of blessings, He .removes them from people

Of course, abundant traditions that have been narrated by Shi'a and Sunnis and similarly manifold stories which have been related in original Islamic sources indicate this point. In fact, if bada' were not to exist, many religious concepts, such as prayer, reliance on Allah, repentance, charity, kindness towards relatives, gratitude, seeking forgiveness, admonition, granting tidings, and threatening, will be impossible to explain. Bada' means belief in the effect of these affairs in the life

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1- Surah Yunus (10), Verse 98

2- Surah Ibrahim (14), Verse 7

Surah Talaq (۶۵), Verse ۲, ۳ -۳

Surah Anfal (۸), Verse ۵۳ -۴

.of a person

Whether we are able to explain bada' in view of Allah's absolute knowledge and cognizance of all affairs or are unable to understand its secret and reality, in any case we must believe in the issue of bada' in accordance with the content of manifold verses of Qur'an and mutawatir traditions.

This is because sometimes, though all the factors and preliminaries for the occurrence of something are present, other factors strip them of their effect and as a result prevent that thing from occurring. In such a case, the existence of those factors, their continuation, and the factors that strip them of their effect are all preserved in the Umm al-Kitab by Divine decree in accordance with the order and arrangement He has specified. Those affairs are also linked to people's actions by choice, they occur through the will of Allah and His decree. That is, neither compulsion (jabr) is involved, nor delegation (tafwid); rather it is a reality between the two:

لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا تَفْوِيضَ بَلْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ الأَمْرَين.

"Neither compulsion (jabr) nor delegation (tafwid), but a matter between the two (ideas."(1)

As an example, Allah has decreed that fire should burn or that every created being should develop in its particular course, and if an obstacle comes about, that thing will not exist. Of course, it should be kept in mind that in matters pertaining to matter, if an obstacle to their coming about blocks the causes of an event, this is not called bada'. Only in instances when

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1- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ٤, Page ١٩٧

things like charity, kindness to family, and prayer influence the occurrence or nonoccurrence of an affair such that humanity considers its existence or non-existence definite from the point of view of apparent causes and then the opposite .’occurs, that is called bada

This is though apparently this instance does not have much difference from the previous instance except that the object of effacement and affirmation in the first issue was observable matters and able to be perceived by most or all people, but in the second issue it is non-observable matters; thus, most individuals are unable to perceive it. The second type indicates the existence and influence of the unseen world .and the existence of Allah more than the first, though all affairs are from Him

In summary, the concept of bada’ is the same concept that is well understood from :this verse of Qur’an in which Allah the Exalted refutes the false belief of the Jews

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللهِ مَغْلُوْلَهَ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمِ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

And the Jews said, Allah’s hand is fettered, may their hands be fettered and they be“ cursed on account of what they said. Rather His hands are outspread; He bestows (howsoever He wishes.”(۱

Thus bada’ in its correct meaning is the negation of this erroneous belief of the Jews, who say that Allah’s hand is fettered from acting in affairs. In other words, bada’ means that Allah’s hands are extended and His absolute power is unlimited, without this having any conflict

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Surah Ma’idah (۵), Verse ۶۴ -۱

.with His absolute knowledge

In other words, the reality of bada', with its correct meaning such that it is compatible with Allah's absolute knowledge, in accordance with His freedom from all forms of ignorance, and opposed to the erroneous view of the Jews and all other deniers of the issue of bada' who view Allah's power as limited, must be explained thus: According to Divine decree, everything has particular effects, and things take place in accordance .with those effects in conformance to Divine Will

In other words, it is a Divine decree that, for example, fire should burn, but the realization of this characteristic—its occurrence—is pursuant to Divine Will. In addition, there are a number of unseen causes, such as reliance on Allah, charity, and prayer—which are not common material affairs—all of which have a peculiar effect. In the stage of action, whichever of those material or non-material causes—apparent or unseen—is stronger will be effective in the occurrence of affairs, and its entailed result will come about. For example, in many cases, in spite of the existence of barriers, kindness to relatives, which has been decreed as a factor in lengthening one's life overcomes all other factors and as a result a person's life is lengthened. :Thus, it has come in a tradition

صِلَّةُ الرَّحْمِ تَزِيدُ فِى الْعُمْرِ وَتُدْفَعُ مِيْتَهَ السُّوْءِ.

"Kindness to relatives lengthens the life and repels the difficulties of death"(1)

The summary of the reality of bada' is that causes and factors are not limited to material causes. Rather, in addition

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ٧٧, Page ١٧٢

to material causes, there are also non-material causes in accordance with Divine .decree

:On this basis, one must have faith both in unseen causes and in Divine Will and that

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ

(Every day He is in a state [of glory]"(١"

and the continuance of His acting in sustaining, curing, guiding, and so forth. Without Allah's will, nothing can produce an effect, though we are unable to fathom the details .of these Divine matters and their connection to one another

It is possible that the meaning of "effacement" in bada' is the effacement of these decrees by other decrees, such as the effacement of the effect of illness and being cured by medicine or prayer, which takes place by the will of Allah. The decree and effect of the illness is also by Divine will, just as we see that in material and apparent causes and effects a particular factor prevented a person from falling into the ocean or from a high place or prevented the occurrence of an accident or collision. And .sometimes this change is effaced or affirmed by the influence of unseen causes

Perhaps the meaning is that decrees are not definite; it is only through the will of Allah that these decrees are effaced or affirmed, and without that no decree comes to :fruition. And the meaning of

وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

(And with Him is the 'Mother of the Book' (٢"

is that all relations and decrees are in the "Mother of the Book," or that whatever takes place does not take place in

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Surah al-Rahman (۵۵), Verse ٢٩ -١

Surah Ra'd (١٣), Verse ٣٩ -٢

".contradiction to it, and everything is in the "Mother of the Book

In any case, bada' has an intelligible and logical meaning and it can't be said to mean the uncovering of a matter hidden from or unknown by Allah. The purpose of explaining bada' in terms of each of the mentioned explanations is so that by understanding these realities people's attention to Allah increase and so that they do not forget Him in any circumstances or rely only on apparent and ordinary means in their affairs. And even when those means are present they should still consider themselves in need of Allah's attention, and when those means are not present, they should not become hopeless; Allah may very well bring about that matter through .other means

In short, unlike the Jews, he should not consider Allah's hands to be tied, and should :believe in the great truth of Divine unity that

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِکَ الْمُلْکِ تُؤْتِی الْمُلْکَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْکَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِکَ الْخَيْرَ إِنَّکَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَیءٍ قَدِيرٍ.

Say: O' Allah, Master of the Kingdom, You grant the kingdom to whomsoever You " please and remove it from whomsoever You please; You make mighty whomsoever You please and debase whomsoever You please. All good lies in Your hand; verily You (have power over all things."(١

As a matter of principle, without such a conviction, the development of humanity and their traveling the worlds of cognizance and true advancement and ascension to celestial positions is not

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Surah Ali-Imran (٣), Verse ٢۶ -١

possible. This is a reality that also has a basis in human nature, and even if he denies the issue of bada’ with his tongue, he admits it with his conscience. Thus, in situations of danger, he supplicates to Allah to repel them and takes recourse to His most beautiful names, like the Sustainer, the Healer, the Sufficient, the Protector, all of which make sense through belief in bada’.

And as Allah says in the Qur’an:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابَ اللهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمِ السَّاعَهَ أَغَيْرَ اللهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ.

“Say: Do you think that if Allah’s punishment come to you or the Hour (of Resurrection) come, that you will call upon other than Allah, if you be truthful; rather Him alone will you call.”[١]

Based on this importance which belief in bada’ has in worshipping Allah and paying attention to Him, it has come in Shi‘a traditions that:

مَا عُبِدَ اللهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِثْلُ الْبَدَاءِ

“Allah has not been worshipped by anything like belief in bada’”[٢]

In summary, the issue of bada’, no matter how it is explained, does not contradict Allah’s absolute knowledge. That is, just as He is “All-Knowing,” He is also “All-Powerful”.

Two objections have been raised regarding the issue of bada’.

First Objection:

The first objection is from the believers in predetermination, who say that when Allah has knowledge with respect to something, it is impossible for His knowledge to be in disagreement with the thing that is known. Thus, the meaning of “Every day He is in a state of glory”

Surah Anam (۶), Verse ۴۰ -۱

Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۴, Page ۱۰۷, hadith ۱۹ -۲

is that every day and every instant whatever Allah's knowledge is associated to occurs; He creates and sustains and withholds. All actions are from Him, and nothing occurs that is outside the range of His knowledge. In fact, outside the limits of His knowledge, no action is possible. Similarly, it is obligatory for all events to which His knowledge is associated to take place, since for such actions not to take place entails His being ignorant, while The Divine Essence is pure of all forms of ignorance, defect, and fault. From this they raise the objection of Allah—as well as His creation—being .compelled

Of course, this objection is rejected by referring to one's reason, since every individual clearly and unambiguously sees himself as free in his actions. In reality, this is a form of objection with respect to obvious matters, just like if someone doubts .whether fire burns or makes hot

Another answer to this objection is that first of all, it doesn't disprove the issue of bada even if it is valid, since if one believes in predetermination and denies free will, effacement and affirmation, which are among Allah's actions, will in the end occur .either by compellation or free will, like all other actions

In other words, a person who believes in predetermination cannot negate effacement and affirmation with this objection; he can only say that the occurrence of effacement .and affirmation, which are both Divine actions, is necessary and certain

Second, the correct answer to the objection itself is that effacement

and affirmation are both uncompelled Divine actions, and like all other Divine actions take place through free will; and "Allah's knowledge of their occurrence through free will" cannot negate their being uncompelled. Otherwise, it would entail knowledge influencing the thing that is known, which is impossible. Similarly, with regard to the actions of people, Allah has knowledge that they will occur through free will. Such knowledge does not negate the person's free will. It appears that the sage Muhaqqiq al-Tusi refers to this asnswer when he says (in the form of a poetical couplet) in :answer to Khayyam

To term the timeless Divine knowledge the cause of disobedience

Is, among those possessed of reason, out of extreme ignorance

That is, knowledge of the performance of actions by individuals possessing free will .does not contradict the uncompelled nature of those actions

:Second Objection

How can the prophecies of the Prophets and Divine friends regarding unseen future events, especially the prophecies of the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) and the pure Imams (peace be upon them) be explained and justified if bada' is possible with regard to them? That is, how have they given information with certainty about so many future events without taking into account the possibility of ?bada' with respect to those prophecies

Answer: The possibility of occurrence of bada' and its occurrence in some instances does not mean that it occurs in all instances. Thus, the prophecies of those personages, whose knowledge was grounded in Allah's knowledge and teaching and inspiration, indicates

.’that bada’ will not occur, and is not in contradiction with the possibility of bada

The objection may also be worded in a different way: according to some traditions, in some instances the reports of the prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) did not come to pass, and the reason for that has been mentioned as bada’ or other factors. And this entails having informed about something that is untrue and being accused of .lying, and causes a weakening of the position of prophecy and vicgerency

In addition, the prophet or vicegerent who makes the prophecy either knows about the occurrence of bada’ or doesn’t know about it. In the first case, it is obvious that announcing with certainty the occurrence of an event that will not occur even though the announcer knows that it will not occur constitutes a lie. And the position of the .prophets is far removed from that

In the second case as well, announcing with certainty the occurrence of an event that may or may not occur because of the possibility of bada’, if not a lie, does not much .befit the position of prophecy or Imamah

Answer: First, according to reliable traditions, the knowledge and awareness of unseen matters that Allah grants to the prophet or his successor and commands him to announce belongs to the definite affairs in which there is no bada’. For example, the Prophet’s (peace be upon him and his family) prophecy about ‘Ammar being killed ,at the hands of the rebellious party

about the martyrdom of Amir al-Mu'minin and Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and the remaining tragedies to befall the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon them), or about Fatimah (peace be upon her) being the first of the Ahl al-Bait to meet him, all are definite matters not subject to bada'. The same is true about the prophecy that Islam shall subdue the world, that Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) will appear at the end of time and the explanation of his qualities and characteristics, and tens of other undeniable prophecies. Similarly, the reports about the unseen given by Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), much of which the Ahl al-Sunnat have also narrated, and the reports of the remaining Imams (peace be upon them) about unseen affairs are not subject to bada', or more correctly, bada' will not take place in these matters, .or else those personages would not have given information about them

The traditions which mention the existence of bada' in their reports of the unseen are either very rare or contain a weak chain of narration, or else their indication of such a point is incomplete. Take for example the same tradition of Abu Hamzah which was .discussed earlier

If there is a sahih (sound) tradition in this regard, it is the tradition of Amr ibn Hamq from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) which says, I had the honor of coming to the presence of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) when he had been

struck with the fatal blow; he (peace be upon him) said, O' Amr, I shall part from you... .until the year ٧٠, calamities will take place; he repeated this statement thrice

I said, O' Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), you said that calamities will occur ?until the year ٧٠; is there deliverance after that year

.He said, Yes, Amr. After every trial there is deliverance and ease

يَمْحُو اللهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allah effaces whatsoever He pleases and affirms, and with Him is the Mother of the" (Book."(١

This tradition does not prophesy the appearance and uprising of the Imam of the ,Time (may Allah hasten his return); rather it gives information about a Divine custom

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْراً

(Verily with difficulty is ease."(٢"

At the same time, it mentions the point that this deliverance will come to be in the case that bada' does not occur. In reality, the Imam, by reciting the verse "Allah effaces whatsoever He pleases and affirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book" wanted to say that this matter is not definite; it may very well be that bada' will occur .and prevent it from occurring

Belief in the Return (Raj'ah) with respect to Belief in the Mahdi (may Allah hasten his (return

:Question

According to many traditions, at the end of time a number of the deceased Imams (peace be upon them) as well as others will return to this world. Is belief in the concealment of the twelfth Imam (may Allah hasten his return) and his reappearance in accordance with belief in the return (raj'ah)? In other words, does

۱- Surah Ra'd (۱۳), Verse ۳۹ [Tafsir al-'Ayashi, Volume ۲, Page ۲۱۷, hadith ۶۸]

۲- Surah Inshirah (۹۴), Verse ۶

the belief in concealment and reappearance include the return and all other events that will occur before the Day of Judgment, or is it an independent belief separate ?from the return

:Answer

Belief in the appearance of the Mahdi and Savior from the Ahl al-Bait and progeny of Fatimah (peace be upon her) is a widespread and collective belief of the Muslims and is not exclusive to the Shi'a. Though the Shi'a also specify his identity in terms of lineage and characteristics, the belief itself is universal, and its tidings have been given in previous religions in the Tawrat and Zabur as well. And according to the principles of the Twelver Shi'a school, without belief in it, one's faith is incomplete, and the acceptance of one's actions is dependent on accepting it. One who dies without believing in this issue or who does not recognize the twelfth Imam (may our souls be his ransom) as the Imam has died the death of ignorance according to the judgment :of the prophetic tradition

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامِ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيْتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةٍ.

Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of the Age of" (Ignorance."(١

.This belief, in terms of influence and importance, is at this level

Belief in the return as well, though it is rooted in the Qur'an and traditions, is not such .that the issue of concealment and reappearance not be explainable without it

Thus, the principle of Imamah and the issue of the Mahdi has been discussed in books even without

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Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ٨, Pgae ٣۶٨ -١

.mention of the issue of the return

Still, it must be mentioned that the issue of raj'ah and the return of the deceased itself is an Islamic issue and its occurrence in previous times is confirmed on the basis of numerous verses of the Qur'an. When this is the case, since it has had a parallel in the past, the possibility of its reoccurrence at the end of time cannot be denied.

When the return of the deceased has occurred in past ummah (communities), according to well-known tradition famous among the Ahl al-Sunnat, they must consider it possible in this ummah as well:

لَتَسْلُكُنَّ سُبُلَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَذْوَ النَّعْلِ بِالنَّعْلِ وَالقَذَّةِ بِالْقَذَّةِ حَتَّى لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ دَخَلَ جُحْرَ ضَبٍّ لَدَخَلْتُمُوهُ.

"Verily you will follow the path of those before you..."(۱)

Thus, the denial of its possibility in this ummah by non-Shias is incorrect according to the meaning of this tradition.

In the end, while overlooking the verses that mention the occurrence of raj'ah in previous ummahs, for the sake of blessings and grace we mention one verse that bears witness to its occurrence in this Nation:

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فَوْجاً مِمَّنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

"And (remember) the day when We shall gather from every community a group of those who gave the lie to Our signs, so they will meet one another."(۲)

This verse indicates a day when from every ummat a group of people will be gathered who gave the lie to the Divine signs, which naturally is a day other than the Day

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۲۱, Page ۲۵۷

۲- Surah Naml (۲۷), Verse ۸۳

.of Judgment

ولا حول ولا قوه إلا بالله العلى العظـــــــيم

وآخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين

And there is no might nor power save with Allah

.And our final assertion is that all praise is for Allah the Lord of the Worlds

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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